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*A Phenomenological Exploration of
the Lived Experience of Being 'Bi-
Rooted' / 'Poly-Rooted', the Reciprocal
Relations Between those Roots and
their Impact upon the Sense of Self.*

*Submitted to the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and
Middlesex University Psychology Department in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctorate in Existential Psychotherapy
and Counselling.*

Nancy Hakim Dowek

October 2019, London, UK

*"Holding myself as I do, one foot in one country and the other in another, I find my very
happy condition in that it is free" ~ Descartes 1648*

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Abstract

This dissertation is a phenomenological exploration of the lived experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant. An exploration of the experience of voluntarily relocating to a foreign country while keeping strong bonds and continuous contact with the country of origin, and of laying down new roots in the new country of residence; the experience of living with two sets of roots.

This research questions how, or whether, the multiple aspects of such a lived experience might be successfully transcended, simultaneously experienced, or might be seen as a constant internal split. It explores the differences in the characteristics, the texture and the quality of the roots that one develops in a country of origin and the changing characteristics of those roots laid down in the new country; exploring the dialogue and tension that may occur between them and their impact on the sense of Self. It discusses the existential framework that accompanies the relocation process into a foreign country; the anxiety that it engenders, and the opportunity to confront existential issues such as choices, responsibility, meaning, freedom and value, and the awakening of self-consciousness that may ensue.

The research concludes that rather than being experienced as a concentric concept with a central anchor around which the whole construct of Self occurs, living with double roots is experienced as an open and dynamic interconnected construct, continually becoming, and reflecting in the Self while simultaneously shaping a new perspective of life.

Keywords: Phenomenological, Heuristic, Hermeneutic, Existential, Bi-Rooted migrants, Roots, Self, Home, Belonging, Duality, Identity.

Statement of Authorship

This dissertation is written by Nancy Hakim Dowek and has ethical clearance from the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University for the Degree of Doctor of Existential Psychotherapy. The author reports no conflicts of interest, and is alone responsible for the contents and writing of the dissertation.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

My name is Nancy Hakim Dowek and paraphrasing on Edward Said's book *out of Place* (1999), my personal story can be summarised by the juxtaposition of those three words side by side and exploring their origins. I am often asked what country I am from originally, but the full answer to that question is quite long and elaborate. So, in attempting to shorten my answer, and in order not to burden my interlocutor, I usually choose to say that I am from what I consider to be my home country, which is not untrue, but is only part of my truth. In reality, I have spent my life in three different countries, each one for a significant amount of time and where I communicated in three or four different languages and engaged in a different way each time within the social and cultural context. I maintain a different relationship with each of these countries. The combination of all three living experiences, and the affective environment I was exposed to, is woven intrinsically into my sense of Self. This multiplicity of roots can also be linked to my original family history for generations upon generations, and as such it has partially shaped the scenery in which I was born or 'thrown into' using Heidegger's (1962) words. Being to some extent always 'the Other', but also perceiving people around me as 'Others' has had a defining influence on my life's perspectives and how I have chosen to live my life.

In my research, I explored my personal experience of these phenomena as well as that of other participants. This exploration is linked to the experience of voluntarily relocating to a foreign country – while keeping strong bonds and continuous contact with the country or countries of origin, and with the experience of laying down new roots in the new country of residence. In short, the experience of being what I am calling '*bi-rooted*' or '*poly-rooted*'. The

decision might have stemmed from personal, professional or any other reasons but not as a result of an irreversible situation such as war, untenable political situations, or natural disasters.

I explored this choice of relocation and where on the continuum of possible emotional and geographical 'homes' an established place was selected - if indeed there had been any specific selection. I questioned how, or whether, the multiple aspects of such a lived experience might be successfully transcended, simultaneously experienced, or might be seen as a constant internal split. Finally, I explored the differences in the characteristics, the texture and the quality of the roots that one develops in a country of origin and the characteristics of those roots laid down in the new country; exploring the dialogue and tension that may occur between them and their impact on the sense of Self.

2.1 Clinical Relevance

Relocating to a new country is a complicated psychological process with considerable effects on personal identity. It may start with a sense of loss (Akhtar, 1999, Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989) or a sense of liberation (Madison, 2010) but usually evolves into a much more complex position. Through this it can contribute to understanding the wider dimensions of the concept of our ever-transforming Self; its fluidity and the importance of its context. The personal dimension is, however, not the only source of my interest in this subject. I have met a large number of people who have the lived experience of voluntarily migrating, each for different reasons, and each with a different story. My interest in the '*bi-rooted*' or '*poly-rooted*' experience has been further enhanced by the reading that I have undertaken since starting my studies and it has consolidated and expanded my primary

personal interest into something with a much larger scope. The variety and impact of these roots upon the individual provide a fundamental understanding of Self and identity, regardless of whether ones' connection to them has been negative or positive.

Following political and economic international trends, the movement of people individually, in groups, as refugees or by choice, continues to be a dominant phenomenon reaching almost every part of the world, which is having a far-reaching influence socially, politically and individually. It is enough to open any daily newspaper, and be bombarded with analysis about this, regardless of the political orientation of the writer. Analysis of the Brexit results in the UK illustrates the impact of such movement, even in a relatively stable and comfortable social climate. However, this subject has been analysed through various paradigms, although less through the personal experience of living with the resulting duality and the comparison between different sorts of roots which is where my interest lies. This opens-up a rich terrain of experiences, with different textures and nuances and has implications for existential therapy. The conceptualisation of the *bi-rooted* individual as described and discussed in this thesis is firmly established in the existential paradigm and has relevant applications to the field of existential therapy. As an existential psychotherapist, it was very important to me to relate this project to my work as a psychotherapist and to contribute to the field of existential psychotherapy theoretically as well as practically.

To illustrate the extent of this phenomenon only in the UK, I will quote just a few facts and statistics from The Centre on Migration, Policy and Society in the Migration Observatory (Vargas-Silva, 2013).

- Between 1993 and 2014 the foreign-born population in the UK more than doubled from 3.8 million to around 8.3 million. During the same period, the overall number of foreign citizens increased from nearly 2 million to more than 5 million.
- London has the greatest number of migrants among all regions with comparable data in the UK - Foreign-born people constituted 39% of inner London's population in 2013 and were 3.0 million in 2014.
- In 2014, the UK population was 13.1% foreign-born (up from 7% in 1993) and 8.5% foreign citizens (up from 4% in 1993).

I researched several aspects of the migrant's experience mainly through philosophical and psychological perspectives as detailed in my literature review. However, I have sometime used concept and theories from social studies, sociology and anthropology in order to contrast or illustrate a point and I have labelled it clearly when doing so. I have been regularly on the alert list of various academic platforms researching the subject immigration, belonging, and using the definition of roots and identity from an existential and phenomenological perspective. All this was fascinating but did not portray the experience of the individual who chooses to migrate while keeping a close relation to his/her country of origin, so in effect becoming '*bi-rooted*' or '*poly-rooted*', nor make comparisons between these different sorts of roots and how this impacts upon their sense of Self.

My aims in this project are:

- To broaden the understanding of the 're-rooting' experience.
- To examine how a multiplicity of roots contributes to the sense of Self.
- To investigate the characteristics and differences between original roots and newly laid ones and how this multiplicity impacts upon the sense of Self.

- To explore if and how the polarity of multiple roots is, or is not transcended by individuals living with this phenomenon.
- To add an experiential view of this phenomenon to the psychological literature, exploring themes or meanings that may emerge, and so raise awareness amongst clinicians of the impact of the experience upon their clients, and help them set aside their own experience and beliefs in order to explore with them that internal space.

Chapter 2

2.1 Literature Review

I have chosen to conduct my literature review through a variety of frameworks, and within these to review established social models of change and processes that migrants may experience when adapting to their new place of residence. However, in order to explore the lived experience of being '*bi-rooted*' or '*poly-rooted*', I will initially discuss philosophical and in particular existential themes and psychological key concepts involved in the process of relocating and will review relevant theoretical thinkers some of whom may be from different disciplines. The review will concentrate on contemporary writers, incorporating their perspectives on migration, the sense of home, and modern and postmodern perspectives on belonging. This will shed a different light upon the experience of migrants in general, and their sense of Self as a '*bi-rooted migrant*' in particular. For the sake of clarity each of these disciplines is clearly sign-posted and labelled. So, initially I am casting a wide net followed by a focused review on this experience in an age of transnational mobility, multiculturalism and digital technology. This review also will include reference to more personal accounts of that experience through memoirs of different authors and poets. The complex picture that all aspects create together forms the appropriate background for conducting my research.

The subject I am researching has a very personal significance for me, and therefore I have been reading various bodies of work connected to it from an early age, especially in the way this experience was depicted in popular literature.

However, conducting an academic literature dictates a different approach, one more systematic and broader in scope in order to cover all the material relevant to this research. I began by exploring concepts such as *home*, *belonging* and *immigration* in the various

disciplines of philosophy, psychology, sociology and anthropology, trying to understand how each discipline conceptualized these and what significance they were given.

But as this research is situated on the crossroads between philosophy and psychology, the following literature review will use these two disciplines in order to lay down a clear foundation and perspective for this project, starting with a section on existential psychotherapy and establishing the links between that and the philosophical concepts which inform it. In addition, when different disciplines are referenced in order to compare and contrast they will be clearly labelled. These may be used with less detail in order to clarify this project's unique perspective. Therefore it is not intended to provide a comprehensive review of these additional disciplines, but rather to be used as further illustration of the complexity of the lived experience of being a bi-rooted migrant. Also, when conducting this literature review each reference opened the door to other theories as well as other disciplines and introduced related concepts such as language, and the impact of technological development in shaping the relationship of the migrant with their countries of origin.

Existential Philosophy and Existential Psychotherapy.

Existential psychotherapy presents a philosophical alternative to any established forms of psychological treatment; it underlines the difficulties and challenges that are inherent in living and the human dilemmas, paradoxes and contradictions which are often neglected by practitioners who focus on personal psychopathology (van Deurzen 2015).

Existential approach to psychotherapy avoids formalisation. It clashes with the conceptualisation of a method that can be taught as a technique based on a matrix upon

which the individual is evaluate, it is conceptualised as an attitude whilst holding in mind existential philosophical concepts (Cooper, 2003).

Existential therapists' most radical concern is with the meaning of being human and is firmly rooted in the experience of living (May, 1969). This fundamental question is shared by many other psychologies, not to mention philosophies and religions. However, it is the manner in which existential psychotherapists go about seeking the answers to the question of what it means to be human that distinguishes them.

Existential philosophy originated with 19th Century philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, (although neither used the term *per se*) and continued with Heidegger and French philosophers such as Sartre, De Beauvoir, Camus, Merleau-Ponty. It is firmly rooted human predicaments such dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, responsibility commitment, nothingness, aloness and loneliness, authentic living and inauthenticity, and the acceptance of the inevitability of death. These themes are often referred to as 'the given' (Yalom, 1980). Humans are "thrown into" a concrete, universe that cannot be "thought away", and therefore existence precedes consciousness and is the ultimate reality (Sartre, 1996). Existence, then, is prior to essence, contrary to traditional philosophical views dating back to the ancient Greeks

"What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means first of all, man exists turns up appears on the scene and only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be." (*Sartre 2007, p.22*)

Existential psychotherapy is essentially about investigating human existence and the particular preoccupations of one individual. A phenomenological attitude is part of the existential therapist's stance in so far as a complete openness to the individual situation and an attitude of wonder is adopted. This will allow the specific circumstances and experiences to unfold on their own right. This stance is also about the therapist being aware of his/her own biases and preconceptions and being either able to bracket them or be open and honest about them. The ultimate aim of this therapy to assist the client in finding their own meanings and take responsibility for their choices and by doing that take ownership for their lives.

As an existential psychotherapist and the conductor of this research my stance as an individual and as a researcher is informed by this paradigm which fits the purpose and aims of this project as is shown very clearly throughout this dissertation.

Psychoanalytical Perspective – Mourning and Loss

The analytical approach to the experience of immigration has evolved enormously from the traditional Kleinian approach on that subject to Grinberg & Grinberg (1989), Akhtar (1999) and Ainslie (2013). The shift in emphasis has moved from traditional thinking - which relegated the environment to little more than a site of expression - into a meaningful factor per se. As a result, the status of immigration has changed from a social condition used as a tool to access the patient's unconscious, into a deep and meaningful experience in itself – and thus a dimension that permeates core analytical topics.

Immigration is such a fundamental life change that there is risk of disintegration in the immigrant's identity (Walsh & Shulman, 2007). It triggers a certain "culture shock" (Garza-

Guerrero, 1974, Handlin, 1973), followed by a state of anxiety challenging the fundamental constructs of the migrant's psychic organisation (Akhtar, 1999). The emotional experience of dis-location, conjoined with uncertainty and anxiety faced by the migrant, may produce the right internal conditions for regressing into a split-internal world, thus reverting to the primary fragmented position of all good and all bad (Akhtar, 1999). This will create an alternation of idealisations on the one hand with devaluations on the other until the fragmented representation of the dis-locating/relocating experience will become whole objects (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, Akhtar, 1999).

This accords with Klein's theory (1940) that major life interruptions will trigger a regression to the pre-verbal period and into the paranoid-schizoid position. Thus the migrant may idealise one country and demonise the other. Klein privileged the possibility of inhabiting the "dehabitation" and becoming familiarised with the locus of pain that is the original uprooting, rather than repressing it, while investing all effort into building a new life (Kristeva, 2001).

Both my interpretation and my experience is that, in the face of this challenge the individual may experience deep grief expressed in various dimensions: emotional, psychological, intellectual, including language and social references. This may trigger a stress response that will cause the breakdown of emotional defence mechanisms.

Staying with the pain might be considered to be a phenomenological and existential concept (Ruddolf, 1993). However, according to Klein, it is followed by the need to connect oneself to the primal separation from the mother (Kristeva, 2001) which departs dramatically from the existential perspective. For Klein, there was never to be another other option other than connecting with the unconscious secrets of early childhood.

However, mourning in relation to a migrant's personal experience has been explored from different perspectives within the psychoanalytic framework. Grinberg & Grinberg, (1989) introduced the notion of mourning in this context, linking the process to the original reason that brought the immigrant to leave his country of origin and arguing that its level of severity will relate to the traumatic impact that this caused (Ibid). However, different theorists have expanded the migrant's mourning experience, introducing the term 'cultural mourning' and arguing that regardless of the reasons for leaving their homeland, the experience of immigration typically activates this mourning process (Ainslie et al, 2013). It may encompass several aspects of the life they used to live; from mourning the absence of close family to a larger interconnection of cultural and personal facets creating their personal identity. The acknowledgement of these aspects weaved into the early fabric of the Self (Ainslie, 2011), introduced this new vocabulary within the psychoanalytic framework. 'Cultural mourning' is not perceived as a marginal environmental issue in the process of a subject's analysis but rather as one of the building blocks of the Self. As such, it is an essential part of the migrants' transformation and his sense of identity (Akhtar, 1999) and therefore will play a role in the therapeutic process.

This experience allows the immigrant to move from love and hate to a new position of ambivalence (Kernberg, 1966); which might change the migrant's perspective on the world he/she inhabits, on his/her own life and of himself, and by doing so adopt a more existential perspective. In my opinion that fluid period, with its difficulties and challenges, can be an opportunity for self-exploration and profound changes or even transformation, leading to a more authentic stance.

Existential Perspective - Home and Homelessness.

The philosophical notion of home and homelessness within an existential framework varies vastly. Classical existential thinkers such as Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Sartre have deliberated on this essential aspect of human existence and the theme was further discussed by contemporary thinkers such as Young and Gadamer. The definitions of home and homelessness in the philosophical and the geographical sense do not necessarily overlap – they are often positioned in opposition to each other. Existential philosophy concentrates on the concept of homelessness as a condition typical of human existence (Abbarno, 1999).

However, humans are inclined to escape from constantly doubting and questioning themselves, and to ignore the ontological anxiety that is inherent in 'being' in the world, in order to seek refuge in a state 'non-being' (Heidegger, 1996). The individual will make himself 'at home' in the soothing sense of safety, living in the ordinary and mundane affairs of the world. The intrinsic fundamental anxiety when 'being in the world' falls within the realm of homelessness (Heidegger, 1996). There are two possible states which best express the authentic and inauthentic: 'non- being' and feeling at home, but being untrue to oneself, or 'being' and not feeling oneself at home whilst being true to oneself (Abbarno, 1999). For Heidegger, our duty as human beings is to embrace the solitude of the realm of homelessness and accept it as a determinative element of personal being. It is our universal destiny (Ibid).

The fundamental human necessity of living with anxiety was further explored by Nietzsche (1995) who argued that home and homelessness are perceived as the same. The 'modern' man is always conscious of not being at home and experiencing a sense of unfamiliarity with

people and things around him. Thus, the fundamental human state is to be out of place or without a home (Ibid).

Sartre (1966) argued that being at home fixes the individual's identity through his identification with the environment and therefore should be interpreted as an act of 'Bad faith' (Sartre, 1966). This restrains our capacity to exercise free choices which create our sense of an ever-changing Self throughout all our actions (Hayes, 2007). Therefore, agreeing on one definition of home proposes a limit to our location in all dimensions and so to whom we are, fundamentally contradicting the Self ever changing (Sartre, 1966). Home, as a definitive concept should be the focus of ceaseless enquiry (Ibid) in our effort to diminish our being in 'bad faith'. A philosophical exploration of 'home' uncovers the realm of the unknown, which resonates with Kierkegaard's (1940) leap of faith that will distance an idealised concept of a haven of safety and security. This suggests new space to explore internal conflicts and by doing so redefine our sense of Self. So, what is a sense of home that keeps changing and shifting? Is there an authentic or real concept of home that resides outside a physical space? Is there a possibility of keeping a concept of home within a space created by the never-ending cycle of construction and destruction and can we existentially connect to ourselves in the context of home and so maintain ourselves in 'good faith'?

Existing in relation within a physical context is one of the principles of the existential school of thoughts. I would define it as the fabric of closely knitted cultural, social, personal and familial aspects, where we define ourselves by continuously developing new connections whilst contesting or removing others. The importance of the context and of our subjective perception of ourselves makes the definition of home more elusive and ambiguous. Sartre (1996) defines existentialism as a practical discipline that attends to the progression and

circumstantial nature of human issues (Adams, 2014). As such, it allows us to transcend the philosophical and the physical rather than keeping them in opposition, and allows us a continuous exploration of that theme. This would redefine the concept of home as a continuum from the physical and geographical to an abstract construct. Thus, the individual progresses from the idea of safety and security (real or imaginary) within familial/ cultural ties, which are all connected at an emotional level, towards a higher state of mind in which the individual is as authentic as he/she can be in a given environment and in a defined point in time (Tuedio, 2002).

Hayes (2007) analyses Kierkegaard's (1940) three spheres of development in relation to being 'at home'. I would like to assemble those three suggested stages of the development of existence and merge them as superimposed dimensions cohabiting in one whole that creates our concept of home. The first dimension is the Aesthetic dimension in which the individual is enthused by the prospect of new experiences, especially those pleasurable and exciting, as part of a desire for freedom. That state of mind will favour pushing the home boundaries in any of its definitions and can be defined as the motor of movement (Hayes, 2007).

However, according to Kierkegaard this dimension becomes spiritless and evokes feelings of despair which is necessary to move us forward to the second dimension; the Ethical dimension. This is the dimension in which the individual is consciously integrating the dimension of responsibility in relation to the direction of his/her life.

However, I would like to point out that these moments of truth do not happen as a bolt from the blue when we explore our life project and values, but are recurrent, especially when we are questioning the validity of our values and their impact on our life. Thus, freedom is not

limited to our curiosity pertaining to new experiences, but about the freedom to choose who we are and more importantly who we are to become. In other words, a psychological and philosophical attempt to become at home with oneself in any given geographical and cultural context.

As in the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage is also followed by feelings of despair at not achieving a better version of Self and this leads to the third dimension; the spiritual dimension. The latter demands a process of deep self- trust, enabling the individual to pursue their inner call and find a purpose in life, regardless of surrounding conditions. That attitude is best expressed as the genuine experience of being at home with oneself and thus identifies home as that inner place in which individuals are true to themselves. The continuous interplay between these three phases will provide us with greater potential for authenticity in our search for home and for embracing change. In that case, Home is no longer perceived as a solely geographical space, but rather our inner space which becomes faithful to who we are, where we become committed to truthful and responsible living. Home becomes the continuous process of creating an internal home for ourselves as well as one between ourselves and our environment; a place connecting past, present and future.

However, when we define home as a sanctuary of wellbeing and safety, the threat of the loss of these may be interpreted as a seismic shock that cancels out this primary concept and emphasises another aspect consisting in disturbance and the collapse of our life's vision (Krell, 2000, Heidegger, 1996). Whilst we may long for a conceptual haven as a home, for those experiencing uprooting the challenges presented by changes are not avoidable.

From these challenging contradictions emerges a new understanding, different from the original concept of home; that of the inherent conflict between the idealisation of the

concept of home and the urge to transcend it (hooks, 1990). In parallel, home can be perceived within temporal connections of past and present and as a space in which we continuously create ourselves by restructuring and redefining these connections (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Our creative tendencies combined with these connections allow us to preserve the defining characteristics (material or spiritual) of our identity, perceptions and the need to belong, intertwining these into a unique personal fabric of being and becoming. We are joining together the dynamic movement of the familiar and the different, interlacing safety and nostalgia with growth and transformation (Ibid). This process offers us new possibilities to evaluate our connection with home from different perspectives and in the context of new experiences we meet along our journey (Tuedio 2002, Merleau-Ponty, 2002). This expresses the feelings of being limited or constricted and may create the desire to transgress familiar boundaries into the transitional experience of a new home.

Gadamer (1996) suggests that home is when we are in our element, in a well- balanced state of openness. Home and good health are the reflection of that inner equilibrium. However, a breach of that balance will inspire us to seek new agents of stability and by doing so highlights the importance of the perpetual engagement necessary to achieve an inner balance. This tension between the mundane and the inner call for new experiences could be perceived as a continuous dialogue between being and becoming. Differentiating the reality from our wishful thinking enables us to create the balance and to avoid stagnation by recognizing the ideal of home (Young, 2005).

Reflecting on these equivocal ideas allowed me to discover a space for discussion, permitting me to contemplate a large range of matters concerning the concept of home and its role in the definition of the Self. A vast and rich concept has emerged in comparison with the

consideration of the personal psychological implications and consequences of uprooting. There is an emphasis on the relational stance of existential thinking, and its application to the concept of home in an attempt to create a renewable home outside the conventional boundaries. If the definition of home resides in the tension between security and novelty, it is by accepting that tension and learning to live with it honestly that might be in 'good faith'. Exploring the meaning of home has the potential to identify and liberate the individual from inauthentic binding constrictions, leading to a continuous transformative process of creating a sense of Self in accordance with experiences and values within or outside a geographical context.

More recently Madison (2010) has coined the term "Existential Migration". His analytical stance concentrates on those subjects who have found their society of origin constrictive and felt estranged from it. According to Madison, existential migration arises from an early sense of a desperate need to explore the world and challenge uniformity and monotony. The interviewees in his book seemed to experience their home-world as repressive and uninteresting, and the very act of travelling created an impression of freedom. However, being rootless also made them feel more fragile and contemplating going back home – an idea which evokes in them rather mixed feelings. This led that space between their worlds becoming their home. The analysis of his research project was performed against the backdrop of existential concepts such as 'being and home' and authenticity. Similarly, in his book "Entre-Deux", Sibony (1991) argues that it is perhaps the condition of the in-between, which destabilizes binary oppositions (Sibony 1991), or the condition of any postmodern subject, or that of any migrating being, through signs and senses. Existential migrants always have to reconcile "being-at-home" with "feeling not-at-home", but they would make

the same choice again, if they had to. Madison believes this is due to their need to live consciously not automatically. In that research, they have not travelled to pursue an international career, or to build a family with a partner from another country, etc., but to follow their own journey as an end in itself.

However, I do not think that the process of redefining oneself following the experience of emigrating is limited to people who have chosen to follow their potential in this way, but is available to all migrants, should they choose to explore that new and often challenging space. Exploring the possibility of belonging to multiple places in different ways does not necessarily amount to not belonging, or as Madison (2010) argues, belonging to the 'non - belonging'.

In my opinion, being initially exposed to that emotional, cultural, physical and psychological 'no man's land' experienced by the migrant creates a psychological window of opportunity for the individual to re-evaluate personal and moral values, social, political and moral assumptions, and to gauge his/her cultural references differently. It results in broadening one's view of the world from multiple perspectives, which in turn expands the sense of Self.

This process has led me personally to change my sense of Self and the organisation of my identity, regardless of the very strong ties that I still cultivate with the country that I considered, subjectively, to be my country of origin. My motivation to travel did not stem originally from a sense of insufferable estrangement or sense of boredom, despite some ambivalent and often contradictory emotions which I feel toward the place I have elected as my home. But, none the less, after a significant amount of time spent in London the quality of my old ties was modified by the experience of living here and simultaneously, as if feeding into each other, that modification has allowed me to lay down new roots that are

fundamentally different and constantly changing. It is this very duality that I have explored - between the different types of roots and the tensions connecting and separating them, whether conveyed through internal dialogue or a sense of polarisation.

The theme of the 'Other' and his/her ethical acceptance by the local society has been explored and analysed in the existential literature for example in Levinas' work (2006) or Bazzano (2013). However, as part of the process of opening oneself to the experience it would be useful to explore also the attitudes of the immigrant towards the locals as his/her 'Others' encounters in a new social and cultural context.

Bi-Culturalism – models of analysis in social studies

The early twentieth century opened new theoretical, often negative, perspectives on the subject of immigration in sociology, anthropology and social psychology. At that time, it was argued that bicultural people should be considered marginal and strange (Park 1928, Stonequist, 1937 in LaFramboise and Gerton, 1993) and that this marginal position led to psychological conflicts, self – alienation and fragmented individuals (Ibid). That ambivalence was described through negative stereotypes, concluding that living with two cultures was undesirable because it was impossible to manage the complexity and the confusion that it created (DuBois 1983, Stonequist 1935).

Additional analytical hypotheses followed, for example the *Assimilation model* (Gordon, 1978) and the *Acculturation model* (Smither, 1982), both stemming from sociology and both relating to the new culture as more desirable and therefore concentrating on how the individual could best achieve and embrace the transition. Theories that emerged later differ in that they are not prioritizing one culture, but on the contrary advocate the possibility of having a positive experience when living with more than one culture. In short, the earlier

models bear negative opinions regarding the possibility of living with more than one culture, whilst the latter provide a positive attitude toward the migration process and of the chances of succeeding in combining new and old cultures.

The *Alternation model* (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986) stemming from Ethnic Psychology, differs from the assimilation or the acculturation models in suggesting that it is possible for a person to understand and to grasp two cultures simultaneously (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986). It connected the immigrant experience to the bilingualism theories of code switching (Saville-Troike, 1981). It further positions a bi-lateral relation between the new culture and the original one, rather than unidirectional emphasis upon that of newly achieved assimilation. It further suggests that the degree of involvement in the two cultures is down to personal choice and is positioned on a fluid continuum rather than rigidly set (ibid). This model's strength lies in concentrating on the cognitive and affective elements which allow the individual to confront the negative impacts of the stressful migrant situation. It further emphasises the role of individuals and their personal choices in the intersection between both cultures, the original and the new (LaFramboise & Gerton, 1993).

An additional model is the *Multicultural model* stemming from cross-cultural, social and cognitive psychology that promotes the potential for a pluralistic approach, encouraging differing cultural members to keep their own identities while pragmatically sharing institutional social aspects (Berry et al, 1988). This promotes tolerance, furthering interaction between different groups and the acquisition of new language skills (Berry, 1986).

Finally, the *Fusion model* (Gleason, 1979) is based on the ‘melting pot’ theory from social studies, proposing that when cultures share geographical, economic, or political spaces, they merge together to create a new culture in which the originals become indistinguishable.

Being bi-cultural does not necessarily mean being *bi-rooted* in the sense of having active roots in the country of origin, with relationships and social, political or financial interests. The above models recognise that individuals, rather than communities, become bi-culturally competent, but view this from the perspective of social studies and tend to focus on the experience within this framework, rather than engaging with the individual’s experience. As such these models may be important analytical tools in the exploration of the impact of bi-culturalism as a social phenomenon, but do not refer to the personal and experiential lived experience. Their categorization is in itself restrictive.

Cosmopolitan and Internationalist – a philosophical approach

An interesting perspective was suggested by Papastephanou’s (2016), regarding the relational stance for the ethical cosmopolitan/foreigner. It was intriguing to analyse some of the suggested concepts, transposing them from their original reference to the cosmopolitan, into the *bi-rooted* individual and his/her experience, exploring the impact of the multiplicity of roots that resonates with my participants’ experience. According to Papastephanou (2013), such a perspective involves opening oneself to the ‘Other’ and presupposes adopting the position in which the Self is *relational*, rather than the central point of reference. This position does make higher demands on the individual and his/her sense of Self and achieving it as an immigrant is no small task. Some boundaries are internal and necessitate different forms of transcendence in order to be overcome – such as those of rootlessness and displacement. It further requires a negotiation of the distance between oneself and others,

which if successful, may lead to a less insular and 'mono-rooted' existence. The process of laying down new roots might be demanding and necessitate a relativist attitude that reduces the distance separating the immigrant from others as much as it is the locals' ethical task to welcome the immigrant. It requires from both, migrant and locals, perhaps distancing themselves from a basic notion of identity – not of its denial – but a rather more profound reflection on the meaning and the subjective construct of that concept.

In fact, acquiring an '*eccentric perspective*', in which different interests and aspects are not orbiting around a single centre, offers a new perspective on the relationship for the individual with multiple roots and multiple aspects of identity. This ethical cosmopolitan/foreigner model better reflects the complexity and the precarious quality of the individual's present attachment rather than focusing on restrictive single allegiances (Peters & Papastephanou, 2013), thus creating a polycentric alternative. The ability to create mobile and ever shifting centres might allow us to reduce the distance we hold towards the environment in which we circulate, rather than just altering the personal, emotional, and cultural filters through which we comprehend 'otherness'. Adopting this open stance is particularly interesting, as the literature often disregards the benefits of an ethical position for the host. Papastephanou (2013) argues that the Self and the rigid notion of identity shapes our reactions toward the new culture, hence her definition of the Self is the intruder rather than one appreciating the novelty of values and cultural references. Here, our constructed Self is interfering with our ability to explore the new and holds us captive in a self- created image of the world which apparently grounds us and creates so-called stability.

This paradoxical position, if accepted and recognized, may allow both freedom and the responsibility which is quite clearly reflecting a principle developed and discussed in the

traditional existential literature by Sartre, Deleuze or Kierkegaard. Being prepared to examine one's assumptions is at the heart of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* (1995), Heidegger's (1996) concept of authenticity or Sartre's (1966) quest for being less in 'bad faith'. When we adopt the dialectic of 'us versus them' regardless of where we position ourselves in that equation we are already creating a conceptual rigidity which restricts our ability to develop a genuine dialogue. The responsibility for that task lies with the guest and the host equally and requires an alternating movement from captive/guest to host and back in the dictated social and cultural context. This stance might contribute to the fluidity of the sense of Self that is required when laying down new roots.

In a *Thousand Plateau* (1987) Deleuze and Guattari developed the philosophical concept of "Rhizomatic". This metaphorical image is based on the botanical rhizome - a stem of a plant that sends out roots and shoots as it spreads, and that Deleuze claimed, amongst other applications, is inherent in the immigrant experience. It generates a multiplicity of connections, e.g. heterogeneity, multiple entry points, routes rather than roots (Bottomley, 1998). Deleuze & Guattari (1994) further argued that this construct of home can have a positive impact on our identity. Safety and strength produce the structure for creating meaning, situated between absolute, determined and novelty, therefore allows being at home with perpetual transformations and progressions and yet creating a home in accordance with personal values (Ibid). Investing ourselves in that manner shapes our life and permits self-development and self-realization while seemingly recognizing its limitations.

However, as tempting as it may be to rise above one's clearly defined sense of identity, whether it is a real possibility is problematic. It may be a lifelong process that requires one to

transcend a naturally polarising position and to superimpose the concept of one's identity upon that of others, thus creating layers of transposed images of oneself that form a newly created entity that is bigger than the sum of its parts.

The Role of the Diaspora - an Anthropological and philosophical approach

Bhabha (1995), an original thinker and philosopher mainly relating to the history of ideas, criticised the representation of the Self as being at the centre of concentric circles. These included universal and progressive values positioned above the value of family, ethnicity or nationalism (Nussbaum, 1994). The concept of such a community without boundaries may seem irrelevant in relation to migrants, some of whom are seeking to build a home and a better future, but some of these themes could be explored from the point of view of the immigrant. Bhabha (1995) suggests a cosmopolitan community envisaged in marginality, a borderline space which he terms 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' in which one can become aware of the existence and equal validity of other cultures, other values. Can an immigrant build new roots without such an inclusive social consciousness? Does voluntarily uprooting oneself necessitate openness and reflexivity? What is the role of the diasporic community and their influence on the personal experience of the immigrant?

Seen through the anthropological diasporas are defined as are heterogeneous, and not all their members are equally open to discovering a new culture or have equal motivations and agenda following their geographic movement (Werbner, 2006). Diasporic existence does not equalise classes and political points of view, although it might create unlikely connections between individuals. Intellectuals may be perceived as elitist and may feel estranged from their working-class fellow nationals despite their beliefs in the value of cultural multiplicity and social mobility. Immigration implies learning new things, but does not necessarily imply

the broadening and adoption of an inclusive stance, especially when sometimes confronted with prejudice and suspicion (Ibid).

Much depends on context and on personal psychological make up and personal values. This raises the critical question of inclusive consciousness. In what sense, does immigration have to be grounded in a broad, experimental, inclusive, normative consciousness of the cultural other? Such a consciousness would need to include elements of reflexivity that is not necessarily shared. This experience may open an internal dialogue between the mobile and fluid Self and the rooted and grounded Self. This dialogue can become fruitful and results in personal growth or open a chasm between these conflictual Selves which results in a sense of being 'out of place' everywhere.

Social Psychology and the importance of belonging

In contrast, the importance of belonging and having meaningful shared relationships on personal or social levels, and the tremendous impact of these upon well-being and mental health has been explored and researched in the domain of psychology. Belonging is perceived as a basic human need like all human needs such as food and protection. In fact, it has been argued that social support is regarded as one of the significant elements distinguishing those who maintain balanced health from those who are ill (Pelletier, 1994). If this is really so, how is this need to be met in the internal universe of the migrant? Is this sense always missing in the migrant's experience or does it not perhaps have to be confined within geographical boundaries or exist in a different dimension? Does each person reach an alternative balance in order to find a way to meet that need?

'Connection' was first mentioned in the early twentieth century as a need for affection (Murray, 1938), then later as a need for positive regard (Rogers, 1951), and further as the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Goodenow, 1992; Maslow, 1970).

For Baumeister and Leary (1995) the main concept of 'belonging' suggests that human beings have an inherent and tenacious motivation to create at least some minimum number of permanent, reliable and meaningful interpersonal relationships which would include emotion and empathy with relevance in the present. Failing to create that sense of belonging may result in feelings of isolation, estrangement, disaffection and loneliness and this further highlights the necessity and importance of developing positive social connections with people that are initially perceived as strangers (Ibid).

This 'belonging' becomes less important for those fully involved in their social surroundings and contrasts with those who have not fulfilled that need. It is however imperative to recognize that people vary and have their own singular and idiosyncratic psychological and emotional make up that will define their needs and ways of expression. The experience of constructing a social and personal relational environment for the uprooted individual, whatever form it might take, will impact upon his/her present and future sense of being and of Self.

Nostalgia – what are its possible implications on the psychological make-up of the 'bi-rooted' individual?

Nostalgia was originally conceptualised around homesickness (Sedikides et al, 2004). It was perceived as a type of melancholia (McCann, 1941). The notion was introduced by the psychodynamic school in the 20th century (Sohn, 1983). In the mid-20th century, nostalgia also became a manifestation of uncomplete mourning and depression (Castenuovo-Tedesco,

1980) and seen as such was mainly linked to homesickness, as well as being recognised as “Immigrant Psychosis”. This arose from a subconscious longing to go back to a foetal state, and was a “mentally repressive compulsive disorder” (Frost, 1938, P.801).

However, nostalgia acquires a distinct conceptualisation separate from a homesickness that relates to ‘cosy’ past times, childhood and yearnings (Davis, 1979) when it is argued that it fulfils existential functions (Sedikides, Wildschut & Baden, 2004), becoming an experiential container that individuals draw upon in order to confront existential threat (Ibid). So, the terms *nostalgia* and *homesickness* have diverged, to be considered as part of separate empirical traditions (Werman, 1977). But, childhood and one’s country of origin are closely linked on many levels; memories, emotions and the impact of one’s seminal years. Therefore, on a personal and experiential level this differentiation may be seen to be rather academic.

It has been argued that nostalgia fulfils existential functions (Sedikides, Wildschut & Baden, 2004) as it may be perceived as a pursuit of meaning and identity when facing existential dilemmas. It can be compared to an experiential container that individuals use in order to confront existential threat or as a valuable way of containing their fears of the abyss (Davis, 1979). Nostalgia is connected to experiences from the past, seen subjectively as happy experiences (Davis, 1979) infused with goodness, happiness and satisfaction, and is usually not infused with emotions we perceive as negative, such as anger, frustration and despair. But also, it is tinged with sorrow due to the acknowledgment that the past does not physically exist in the present (Ibid). In this way nostalgia can solidify and reinforce our identity and sense of Self, unifying parts from the past with the present and so creating a meaningful personal history (Cavanaugh, 1989; Mills & Coleman, 1994). Furthermore, it

may help the individual to cope with the present by restoring self-worth when recalling those different periods of their glorified and idealised (but perhaps mediocre) past (Kaplan, 1987; Kleiner, 1977). This is not to say that nostalgia is the answer to problems presented by the immigrant or that one is not responsible for confronting difficulties and actually daring to face fears, but it is an important and undervalued aspect of the Self.

In contrast, de Beauvoir (1992) identifies the need for nostalgia as a tendency to flee from freedom. This stems from our longing for the security of childhood. In the child's world, s/he carries no responsibility. S/he evolves in a 'serious world' that is comprised of ready-made values (Ibid). The child perceives the world as prearranged, its values as inherent, and the adults who dominate their lives as having pure being (Moore, 2008).

However, according to de Beauvoir when we mature into our subjectivity and we become familiar with our freedom, then the nostalgia for the carefree life of the child in which we traded freedom for security, and the resignation or outright denial of one's responsibility, constitute bad faith (Acampora, 2002).

Yet, nostalgia, when examined in a non-binary way provides a more textured description of the phenomenon. It may be labelled as a wellbeing emotion (Ortony, Clore and Collins, 1988), and as such these emotions represent a reaction rather than a goal in themselves. Thus, nostalgia can be seen simultaneously as wellbeing emotions and/or emotions of distress or loss, an intrinsic emotional duality (Johnson-Laird and Oatley, 1989). Because of this duality and complexity, nostalgia is cast as a complex emotion.

In light of the above, I may conclude that nostalgia encompasses various emotions combined with the subjective values given to it. Whilst it may involve contrast between past and

present, it does not necessarily involve solely sadness. It may be triggered by interpersonal, social and environmental stimuli that may or may not involve a comparison between past and present. Furthermore, it may or may not elicit sadness because of the preferred past when compared to the actual present. So, in what way does the above discussion shed light on the *bi-rooted* individual's experience?

It can contribute to a sense of connection in moments of solitude, isolation and estrangement and by doing so might have a therapeutic effect. It forms an interesting perspective on the contrast between the individual and the 'herd' as interpreted by Heidegger (1962) or Sartre (1966), in which the individual does not disappear and lose himself in the herd. On the contrary s/he uses the distance to ground himself, allowing actions according to personal choices. One could argue that the immigrant may feel that nostalgia exacerbates the sense of isolation, but it can facilitate the process of settling down by developing a continuity of identity (Chaplin, 2000; Davis 1979). This continuity may enhance the use of personal resources, which in turn will provide a context for identifying alienation without allowing it to override a sense of Self and of identity.

This continuous process may also shed light on and improve personal ownership of an original cultural background; in the way it has shaped and influenced the construction of his/her sense of Self and value system, and on the role of nostalgia in the individual psychological make up. The dual characteristics of nostalgia that are inherent in the migrant's position not only reflect the deeper sense of the duality intrinsically knitted into the experience of the immigrant, but also closely relate to the internal dialogue entertained by the migrant. This transforms the sense of longing into a constructive experience, from

longing to 'be-longing', (being in a state of longing), from a unilateral perspective to that of a broader and relative perspective.

The Psychological Challenges of the Acquisition of a New Language

Language is located at the crossroads of every social interaction, but more significantly is part of any internal dialogue and self-perception (Davis et al, 2011). It is an integral part of social circumstances, of interrelations, procedures and institutions experienced on a regular basis by speakers (Ibid). However, I have a larger interest in how individuals recall linguistic experiences in the context of their personal versions of transnational mobility in general, and of the experience for the bi-rooted individual in particular.

Originally, research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) concentrated on teaching and learning, and bilingualism. The most developed areas of SLA studies are associated with linguistics (White, 2003) and cognitive psychology (Doughty & Long, 2008). However, an increased amount of research is exploring the relevance of identity formation to SLA (Benson et al., 2013; Nunan & Choi, 2010). The theme of identity and second language learning has become closely linked, (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, Block, 2007 Norton 2013) and so clearly has relevance for the impact of multiple roots and languages on the sense of Self and on the construct of one's identity.

Acquiring a new language is part of a challenging and complex psychological process that requires mental and emotional investment (Shabita & Mekala, 2013) and particularly in adulthood. However, many people are exposed to the English language through various mass media, regardless of whether or not it is a dominant second language in their country of origin. The impact of the encounter with a new culture and a new language triggers a complex process that may require adjustments in various aspects of the migrants' lives (APA,

Crossroad, 2012). These changes include the use of the new language, cultural and ethnic identity, personal values, and social structures and social relations (Yoon et al 2008). Acculturation may happen in stages but usually the first meeting point and perhaps first barrier is the acquisition of a new language (Yoon et al, 2008). This lived experience may impact on the sense of self, as language and verbalisation is one of the means by which we express ourselves and meet the world as well as playing a vital role in our emotional lives. Smith (2015) argues that language and words play a double role, they describe how we feel but more importantly they shape how we understand our feelings. In other words, in my opinion, limited vocabulary diminishes emotional self-expression, but more importantly limits self-perception.

Ethnolinguistic identity theory (ELIT) uses four main concepts: social categorization, social identity, social comparison, and psychological distinctiveness that are derived from a positive perception of oneself in a group, which in turn contributes to a positive self-identification (Jackson & Hogg, 2010). These four aspects are intrinsically knitted into the new reality for the migrant (Ibid).

Communication is a key element in the experience of the newcomer and in creating new meaning for the migrant. Berry & Kim (1988) developed a theory which concentrates on four means of communications: Intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass media behaviour and the communication environment (LaFramboise and Gerton, 1993). That theory connects the level of cultural acquisition with the communication skills that the migrant will develop and that of the environment s/he is exposed to. Communication, in itself a vast concept, is used here in the linguistic sense, as well as the willingness to open oneself to exploring the values and cultural aspect of the new society.

Thus, various aspects are created through language; the self- reflection of the migrant's image in the new language, and his/her ability to navigate around a new cultural awareness, coupled with the openness to explore it while retaining loyalty to one's origins and first language. In fact, this ability, to retain both cultures and therefore both languages, was suggested as being one of the main stressors in the process of acculturation (Padilla, 1980).

Linguistic code switching was described as a method of identifying various relations within a social context (Saville-Troike, 1981). Thus, the connection between the acquisition of the new language and the adaptation process to the new place of residence can be seen as being closely linked.

It was interesting to explore these aspects in the light of the existence of a strong cultural reference point for the *bi-rooted* individual. The psychological distinctiveness that ensues is an aspect that sheds light on the exploration of the sense of Self and the likelihood of its transformation when expressing oneself in a new language. The time spent immersed in the language is a factor that needed to be explored because of the development of the subjective internal language of the migrant and its impact on his/her complex and paradoxical position.

Relativism and Relativity in Philosophy

In philosophy, relativism holds the view that a moral compass is culturally constructed, based on the values of a particular culture (Baghrarian & Carter, 2017). From a relativist perspective, right and wrong are products of different principles and their mandate is limited to the context in which they are created. Furthermore, it maintains that in abstraction, some things and their characteristics are only relative to a given framework of reference (such as specific cultural conventions or individual morals and values), and accordingly, the veracity

of the assertion that attributes a property to a 'thing' is supported only when the relevant framework of reference is stipulated. Relativists typically maintain that if something is only relatively so, then the existence of an independent framework is compromised and the 'thing' in question cannot be established (Ibid).

The major categories of relativism vary in their degree of scope and controversy. In addition to the definition of relativism as 'moral relativism' encompassing the differences in moral judgments among people and cultures, truth relativism argues that there are no absolute truths, i.e., that truth is always relative to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture i.e., cultural relativism (Swoyer, 2003). There is also 'descriptive relativism', which as the name implies, seeks to describe the differences among cultures and people without evaluation, while normative relativism evaluates the morality or truthfulness of views within a given framework (Ibid).

Due to its controversial arguments, relativism, in its various forms has been an equally popular and loathed philosophical doctrine. Its supporters see it as a forerunner of tolerance and as such as the right ethical and epistemic stance, valuable to the open-minded and tolerant individual. In contrast, it has been dismissed by critics for its suspected inconsistency, its lack of coherence and mostly for its uncritical intellectual laxness (Baghramian ,2010). Debates about relativism infiltrated a large spectrum of philosophical sub-disciplines. Many disciplines have felt the necessity to respond to this subversive idea; from ethics to epistemology, science to religion, anthropology, political theory to ontology, theories of meaning and even logic (Ibid).

Discussions about relativism refer sometimes to considerations relevant to the very methodology of philosophy and to the division between two camps in philosophy: the

analytic and the continental. And yet, despite a long history of debate going back to Plato and an increasingly large body of writing, it is still difficult to come to an agreed definition of what, at its core, relativism is, and what philosophical import it has.

However, what is interesting in this exploration is the possibility to apply it in an associative way. It was interesting to explore this term and the concept that derived from it in relation to the duality arising from the *bi-rooted* migrant's experience.

The Self – a Psychological and Philosophical Approach

The Self has been discussed in length from various perspectives, mainly philosophical and psychological, and yet this subjective and highly significant construct still remains elusive. It is a conceptual construct that aims at understanding the individual's deepest sense of who they are; of being in relation with him/herself and his/her surroundings (Sedikides et al, 2004).

“The Self is not only influenced by its past experience: it harks back to them, hooks on to them, connects with them, or whatever other term we use. The psychical processes are not a disconnected series of events, like the ticking of a clock; we have not merely a succession of consciousness but a consciousness of succession” (Thilly, 1910 p23)

This personal construct may be especially, but not exclusively challenged during the experience of immigration. The reaction to that seismic shift depends on many personal factors and evolves from the self-work invested by the individual over the years. As awareness expands, so does one's unique consciousness of having a personal history, characteristics and dispositions. Thus, the Self is attributed multiple roles so far as it witnesses the world around and it also contains our consciousness of it and of our identity.

The self-concept can be represented on three essential levels: the individual Self, the relational Self, and the collective Self (Sedikides & Brewer, 1996). In other words, as individuals we are looking to attain self- definition and interpret ourselves (i.e., identity) through three central avenues: (a) individual uniqueness, (b) individual relatedness to another and (c) the individual within a group (Ibid). Individualisation is attained by distinguishing self from others; a unique configuration of distinguishing traits and characteristics within his or her social context. It is also linked to motivating factors that shield, strengthen and boost individual psychological wellbeing (Brewer & Gardner, 1996, Sedikides, 1993).

The Self reaches beyond classic conceptions located exclusively in the individual. Thus, I consider it crucial that we do not relate to the Self as a distinct entity isolated from the environment in which it exists in the world. We can expand the concept of the Self as an all-encompassing social environment, for example, through bodily experience, habitual actions and socio-cultural encounters, as well as its interrelations between individuals (Koed Madsen and Cowley, 2013).

The *relational-self* develops from one's assimilating aspects of persons of special significance and expresses our position in those relationships and it is founded on personalized connections with family, professional, and social contacts. This aspect is mainly associated with the drive to reach beyond ourselves and the desire to protect the other and it reflects the value of the relationship and of our desire to maintain it (Brewer & Gardner, 1996)

The *collective Self* is reached through the process of including the individual in a group which is oppositionally contrasted with other groups and members. In this case the Self is derived from shared bonds with own members (though, not necessarily close relationships) and

identification, even if in a symbolic way, with the group. It was defined by Turner et al. (1987) as a shift in the perception of self from a unique, fixed concept to an interchangeable example of a social category. So, the Self in its collective aspect draws its identification from the comparison with other groups and through that protects and enhances its own group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). These multi-dimensional aspects of the self are challenged simultaneously at all levels and in different ways in the migrant's experience.

Drawing on Sartre's concept 'bad faith', De Beauvoir (2003) argued that the self is movement. For her, human existence is neither god nor thing as opposed to Sartre's point of view. We are aware of our consciousness and we often feel attracted to one side of the pole. We inhabit this tension between pure transcendence and absolute subjectivity as opposed to pure immanence, absolute objectivity (Moore, 2008). According to both Sartre and De Beauvoir, projects of bad faith fundamentally aim at fleeing from our freedom and asserting our chosen Self. In order to reduce anxiety in the face of freedom, we reduce our hold of Self and we revert unto a mode of 'lack of being' and so the project will turn into 'bad faith'. However, according to Sartre and De Beauvoir, in order to be ourselves we have to exercise transcendence (Sartre 1966; De Beauvoir, 2003).

"Life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and surpassing itself; if all it does is maintain itself, then living is only not dying, and human existence is indistinguishable from an absurd vegetation; a life justifies itself only if its effort to perpetuate itself is integrated into its surpassing and if this surpassing has no other limits than those which the subject assigns himself. (De Beauvoir 2003, p. 82-83)

Another ambiguous aspect resides in the duality between matter and thought (body and consciousness). This ambiguity does not contradict the fact that our consciousness cannot

exist outside the material aspects of our being, as our body is an additional facet of our facticity. However, De Beauvoir disagreed with the inclination of the Occidental philosophical tradition in favouring one side of that duality and argued that duality is as fundamental as consciousness (De Beauvoir, 2003).

The fluidity of the Self and its ever-changing aspects are interconnected and impact on each other at all times, creating an ever-changing movement between experience, interpretation and meaning, consciousness and embodiment which feeds back into constantly renewing the experience of Self across the various dimensions.

Fragility, Vulnerability and Compassion (Psychology and Philosophy)

As a result of a wide-spread belief that vulnerability equals weakness (Brown & Schopflocher, 1998) it is not uncommon for individuals to avoid exposure. The act of daring to drop the defences put in place to protect us from feeling vulnerable, open the Self to experiences that bring purpose and meaning, dispelling the cultural myth that vulnerability is weakness and arguing that it is a measure of courage (Ibid).

Vulnerability is viewed as a dynamic continuum from resilience to difficulties in coping arising from conditions occurring in the environment (Rose & Killien 1983; Lessick et al. 1992). Every individual is positioned on this continuum and their position will change over time depending on personal circumstances and the willingness to accept changes when they occur. People are most vulnerable during transitions or major life changes (Rose & Killien 1983; Rich, 1992).

Changing the perception of vulnerability would be a significant step forward toward accepting oneself as a whole and transforming the experience of vulnerability from

disempowering to empowering. Truly courageous exploration and re-evaluation of socially accepted values surrounding vulnerability and weakness would provide an opportunity for expanding the sense of self.

De Beauvoir (2003) sees human beings as realizing their existence in disclosing possible ways of being and bringing forth their meanings. This includes exploring our vulnerability and taking ownership of it. For her, human existence has its being in vitality, sensitivity, and intelligence, which are not ready-made qualities, but a way of throwing ourselves into the world and of unveiling our being.

Linking social psychology with existential psychology, Hirschberger & Shaham (2012) argued that change is also indistinguishably linked to the human existential condition. For Sartre (1966) being and becoming and the perpetual flux in which we operate, is the core of our existence, as we recreate our Self perpetually and so he based his theory of choice, freedom and responsibility on this premise. Practically, change is undeniable; people are born and die daily. This fact is a confirmation of the perpetual cycle of life that is constantly moving forward and changing (Levine & Levine, 1982). Yet human beings are relatively unmindful of this, and attempt to create a sense of stability, solidity and permanence in their lives (Ibid).

Change consists of a transformative process from one condition into another and includes the disruption of a present and accepted situation (Fox, 1998). Consequently, the temporary instability created by change may be experienced as a difficult transitional situation that undermines the psychological balance within which we might function, despite its imperfections. As living organisms on a primary and basic biological level we aspire to preserve a persistent internal equilibrium – Homeostasis (Cannon, 1935). This aspect is reflected on both a personal and familial plane because permanency may be regarded as an

elementary constituent of our search for protection and security (Maslow, 1970). Habits, rituals and traditions are good illustrations of the inventive means by which we preserve permanency while relentlessly confronted by an ever-changing environment pertaining to all aspects of life. One of the main explanations for that adverse reaction to change is rooted in our fear of losing control and the sense of insecurity that ensues (Fox, 1998).

Buddhist tradition maintains that it is our being oblivious to the impermanence of existence which causes angst in the face of death (Rinpoche, 1992). Changes remind us of the unavailability of death and of our impermanent and brief state of being. We would like various aspects of our life to remain unchanged and therefore changes are experienced as grief, loss and anguish (Hirschberger & Shaham, 2012). Each change represents a disturbing reminder that time is perpetually moving forward and all our futile attempts to hold onto things are doomed to fail (Rinpoche, 1992).

Heidegger (1996) argued that in order to be able to choose our way of being – the life we would like to live within its limitations and its facticity - we must liberate ourselves from our flawed tendency to hold on to the illusion of permanence, and accept impermanence as a basic condition. Furthermore, he suggested that it is the very actualisation of death that allows us to live our life authentically and closer to our true Self (Ibid).

Contemplating the concepts of change, persistence and resistance to change is corroborating the hypothesis that they act as one, reflecting different aspects of the same concept and are complementary to each other (Watzlawick et al, 2011). In my opinion, these aspects could not exist without each other, as perpetual flux and change will translate into a permanency for change, hence challenging the very concept of change. What is perceived as problematic in one set of circumstances can become the solution in a different set of

circumstances or from a different perspective. Thus, change can be perceived as an existential threat or welcomed as a positive experience (Hirschberger & Shaham 2003). The unknown and the fundamental instability of life, especially when facing death, may be experienced as an overwhelming loss of control over whatever lies ahead. In that case, this kind of resistance may momentarily appease our existential anxieties and provide a reassuring illusion of stability and with it a sensation of safety. But time keeps moving forward, indifferent to our existential concerns, so the prospect of stability does not provide an existential consolation. The unrealistic longing for permanence causes desperate endeavours to create the illusion of control while duplicating behaviour patterns that will preserve a present that is considered safer than any alternatives. These efforts may create a negative dynamic inside the system within which they are taking place, in a group or individually (Ibid). However, others may realize that it is not possible to have total control over events and will try to preserve a healthy equilibrium by using this opportunity to make meaningful personal decisions which will contribute to the process of self-development and personal transformation (Ibid).

In his quest for realising spiritual transformation, Nietzsche introduces the three metamorphoses of change in his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1997). It describes the progression of spiritual transformation that exemplifies his views for achieving a successful life. The phases represented by the camel, the lion, and the child:

“Of the three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child. There is much that is difficult for the spirit, the strong, reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands.”(p.50)

The camel: *"What is heavy? Thus asks the weight-bearing spirit; thus it kneels down like the camel and wants to be well laden."* The camel asks: *"What is heaviest ... that I may take it upon me and rejoice in my strength"* (p. 54).

The camel carries great weights and survives in the desert. However, this burden risks leading to bitterness, despair, and the spirit of revenge if the camel does not transform into a lion and so may ruin the seeker's quest. *"It is always in the "loneliest desert a second metamorphosis occurs, the spirit here becomes a lion; it wants to capture freedom and be lord in its own desert"* (Ibid).

The camel becomes a lion when the individual discovers that there are no absolute values despite having ventured into the desert of human expectation. This is a life altering moment in which s/he recognizes that there is nothing preventing them from creating their own values. In this stage the lion encounters a dragon, which is Nietzsche's image of social norms. In the lion stage, the subject of spiritual transformation must engage the dragon in mortal combat. One needs to have the spirit of a lion in order to defeat the law of "Thou Shalt" and create conditions for one's successful progress.

A child-like spirit is the next and last stage of transformation: *"The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a Sacred Yes"* (p. 55). The lion becomes a child when the individual who says 'I will' ceases to affirm their values contrary to the law of "you shall", and instead affirms them: *"for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills its own will ... its own world"* (p. 55). Life is no longer a reactive struggle to defeat other forces. Life is a celebration of one's powers – a sustained act of pure affirmation. The child-like spirit knows the joy of life and the innocence of perpetual creation.

Regardless of differing views surrounding the process of change in an individual, these processes do invariably require a change in world view which requires abandoning old 'luggage' in order to accept life's limitations and acquire the courage to make new existential choices.

Contemporary reflections on Self and identity in Sociology in the modern and post-modern era.

In his book *Modernity and self-identity* (2008), Giddens proposed a model based on three elements describing the distinctive dynamic of the modern world (Giddens, 2008), and I found these intriguing in relation to the experience of relocating, migrating and being “*bi-rooted*”.

His first element is the separation of time and space. In the pre-modern era the ‘When’ marker was connected to the ‘Where’. The separation of time from space involves the creation of a void separating *space* from *place*. However, the modern world shares a global system with standardised time zones creating a different social and experiential construct.

A map of the world in which there is no privileging of place reflects the formation of social relations, on an international, national, social and personal scale. More pertinent to the ‘*bi-rooted*’ individual, it delivers a platform on which time and space can re-combine in manners that connect socially outside geographical space. The ‘when’ becomes connected to the where in a different way, and not necessarily through the intermediate of a place.

The second point he raises is the ‘*Disembedding*’ of social institutions which he argues is a defining characteristic of late modernity and of rapid social change. It relates to our capacity to cooperate with organisations without needing to meet their representative in person,

lifting social relationships from their local context and extending them across unfixed zones of time and space.

Trust becomes a factor forming the motivation of numerous daily activities. One of the many aspects of trust includes commitment; a leap of 'faith' that is more precisely related to the absence of time and space. Trusting can take various shapes, for example when we trust someone who is constantly present it shapes the quality of the trust that feeds and colours the relationship. This kind of trust relates to the actions and actual behaviour of the individuals involved in the relationships. However, trust may not be the consequence of a conscious decision but rather of something deeply rooted in the connections between the ability to trust and personal growth. We could make a conscious choice to trust a given phenomenon, but one could argue that it is faith that dominates and thus trust is not merely an exercise in calculating odds. We may be protected or exposed to old or new dangers as a result of the 'disembedding', be it local or global, and question our attitudes in an attempt to cope with an ever-changing situation.

The third point raised by Giddens is the point of institutional reflexivity – the transformation of time and space combined with '*disembedding*' mechanisms that push social relations far from pre-modern establishments. The reflexivity of modernity is different from that which is used to self-monitor the individual and is intrinsic to human Self. It refers to the need for continuously reviewing different aspects of social life in relation to the environment, in the light of a constant influx of new information. It is not only the result but also constitutes in itself a factor of modernity.

The reorganisation of these three aspects of modernity assume adherence to a global system that explains the development and changes in the nature of social life and the

position of the individual. They deal with the intersection between presence and absence, the interweaving of 'long distance' social relations with local contexts.

These themes described in the framework of social studies may overlap with the *bi-rooted* experience in so far that these three aspects of modernity will impact on the lived experience, from the digital connection, the acceptance of simultaneous systems converging and creating a web that can be seen as the global system that loosens the base of a single frame of reference.

Transnational and *bi-rooted* - a social and anthropology approach versus an existential and phenomenological approach.

Transnationalism, as defined by Basch et al (1994) is a process by which migrants, create social fields in their daily lives which cut across national boundaries. *Nations Unbound (1994)* is an ethnographic study of a trend in migration-transnationalism; immigrants are no longer rooted in one location creating a definition that is more than expanded nationalism.

Transnational theory is the idea that there exist increased connections between societies across the world. By building transnational social networks, economic alliances and political ideologies, they are able to cross the geographic and cultural boundaries of both their countries of origin and of those newly adopted (Vertovec, 2004).

However, transnational migration studies form a highly fragmented field (Espiritu, 2005); there continues to be much disagreement about the scope of the field and the outcome of the transnational processes under observation (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, 1999; Glick Schiller, 1997).

In order to separate experiences from what may be “common” among anyone abroad, Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt (1999) argued that it would be best to confine the concept of transnationalism to occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts across national borders over time.

More broadly, transnationalism is constructed on the notion of interconnected networks, and the ability to maintain and foster relationships on common issues. despite any geographical space between them (Vertovec, 1999). It is this idea of “social morphology” that may best describe transnationalism (Vertovec, 2004), with the connections between social organization and social groupings throughout and across different physical borders, and the influence of these networks on individuals and groups (Wiltshire, 2001; in Vertovec, 2004).

Much research on the relationship of transnationalism and migration focuses on linkages between migrants and others, whether it is those within their family, their neighbourhoods, political associations, religious connections, or other networks. This means transnationalism’s definition is specifically linked to activities and social activities relating to the country of residence or country of origin. In effect this means that part of the life of the transnational individual is structured around a diasporic construct. Within this is also a conversation not only on continued networks between migrants and those in their home country, but also the shaping of norms within the context of transnationalism (Vertovec, 2004) and understanding their economic and social activities (Guarnizo, Portes & Haller, 2003).

So, from an epistemological stance, I find transnationalism to be a valuable conceptual tool, as it highlights migration in multinational social fields (Levitt, 2001; Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001; Perez, 2004).

In contrast, the term *bi-rooted* is a way of '*being in the world*'; an emotional and psychological and indeed philosophical state that necessitates addressing existential issues that emerge from it which contribute to a broader experience of self. This expansion of the experience of self results from developing an awareness of multiple versions of self, which emerge from different contexts and are multi-layered in character. This state of 'being in the world' does not relate necessarily to any social activity or close relations with fellow national in the country of residence. Rather, it relates to lived experience in the individual, and their personal definition of their roots, their characteristics and the relationship between these roots. This state allows existential themes to emerge and requires the individual to confront these issues in order to make sense of the experience. This research project examines the experience of being a migrant through the overlapping lenses of psychology and existential philosophy, through a phenomenological exploration of the experience. By doing so this project exposes its uniqueness and contribution to existential psychotherapy as discussed in the relevant section.

As a concept, *bi-rooted* migrant could be characterised as an example of an approach addressing issues in phenomenology, philosophy and psychology. This is a process; a subtly nuanced integrative responsiveness within context rather than a construction. This formulation highlights the tensions pertaining to human existence emerging from the relationship between being and context. It exemplifies the fundamental relation between freedom and finitude. It is best expressed in an innovative understanding of abstract

concepts such 'home', 'belonging', 'roots' , 'time' and self, as being dynamic dynamically interlaced and ever changing on a relative continuum.

The term *bi-rooted* implies paradoxes or internal conflicts that are inherent to human nature philosophically and psychologically, (De Beauvoir, 2003; van Deurzen, 2015). These inherent paradoxes and internal conflicts manifest themselves in a particular way in the experience of the *bi-rooted* migrant.

This inherence is present from the early days of our existence, when as children we are learning to navigate our way safely between the opposites that surround us. This idea that human living takes place in the tension between opposing forces is present throughout existential philosophy. This is represented through the existential body of work. Heidegger (1996) describes it through the tension between life and death. For Sartre's (1966) the tension resides between being and nothingness; between being-for-itself (the being of consciousness) and being-in-itself (the being of objects). Kierkegaard (1980) defines this tension as one between the infinite and the finite. He claimed that the challenge of living is to maintain the right sort of tension between both. The person who is immersed in the finite gets caught up in the dangers of concrete living. For Kierkegaard it was imperative to develop the ability of modulating between the two extremes. Merleau Ponty was equally aware of the paradoxical nature of human living and he firmly believed that we have to live with what amounts to an essential ambiguity (Merleau Ponty, 1968).

Similarly, we learn to process polarities in more complex way as we become more aware of our ability to grasp complex concepts (van Deurzen, 2015) which is at the heart of the therapeutic work. It is the tension between these movements that creates energy and momentum (Ibid). However, each movement forward, and the tension that it engenders, will

create a new paradox that needs to be addressed and processed, held or transcended (Schneider, 1999). Strength exists in synergy with vulnerability and we need to accept our imperfections and confront our weakness and vulnerability in order to develop strength and resilience (Nietzsche, 1997).

De Beauvoir (2003) has argued that the paradox of being alive means that we cannot have one extreme without the other, but that it is our responsibility to address this as part of our moral obligation. Humans experience ambiguity regarding their dual nature, which De Beauvoir (2003) sees as composed of both matter and thought (or body and consciousness). For de Beauvoir, human consciousness is dependent upon the bodily or material aspects of our being, but not identical with it. The body is another unavoidable characteristic of human facticity; our ability to transcend our physical limitations through thoughts and consciousness highlights both our freedom and moral obligation. The problematic tendency entrenched in Western philosophical tradition prioritises one side of an apparent dualism, such as spirit over matter, rational over emotions, or the self over the collective group. For De Beauvoir the tendency to perceive duality is as primordial as consciousness itself. Furthermore, as human we hold a combination of these polarities, and when our ambiguities are examined, it becomes apparent that although human perception is embedded in dualism, no prioritization of any one over the other need be established.

The conceptualisation of the experience of the *bi-rooted* individual emphasises the dual aspect of human existence and of our ability to hold or transcend this duality, but that first and foremost this needs to be acknowledged and accepted which fits the existential paradigm and can become part of our striving for freedom. Working on the continuum

between polarities and oppositions do not cancel their existence, quite the opposite it frames it.

Personal Experiences in Contemporary Prose.

The lived experience of migrating has been explored in personal memoirs for decades. These examples were chosen because of the extremely personal and emotional tone, the intensity of the emotions involved and the honesty with which the authors describe and analyse their personal journeys, and because some aspects of their experience resonated strongly with mine. Each of these writers has experienced a different lived experience and yet some of the themes emerging from all of these memoirs link together a greater understanding of being a migrant.

In his book *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012), Salman Rushdie describes his own experience whilst reflecting on the migrants' condition in general. For Rushdie, there is a balance of loss and gain in the process of migration and consequently of searching for identity. The migrant has the power to create imaginary homelands, in his case India of the mind, having thus access to more than one world. Although haunted by a general sense of loss (in the more traditional meaning of loss, of homeland and original identity), he acquires the ability to recreate himself in the space (the new culture) he inhabits. He further states that having been born across the world we are translated men (Rushdie, 1991). For him the condition of the translated man will be just a mirror of the real hybrid identity. However, Rushdie stresses the creative aspects of such a cultural blend inherent in the situation. The migrant by definition is obliged to face great questions of change and adaptation (Ibid) regardless of the position he chooses to adopt as a result of his experience. Rushdie states that the migrant has a double consciousness due to his geographical and cultural dislocation and thus

as a translated man Rushdie believes that something always gets lost in translation (Rushdie, 1991). Some of Rushdie's experience resonated strongly with mine. However, his argument that the creation of the migrants' new identity derives from his perception of the local culture and identity, and his need to reflect that culture in his new Self (Ibid), left me perplexed. I find it slightly restrictive and perhaps relates to his own personal experience. Is it not possible to create that new identity based on authentic aspirations rather than transforming oneself into the Other, and by doing so create a new identity in agreement with the newly inhabited space? Or indeed to create a new blend of both cultures emerging from the juxtaposition of the original and new cultural meanings and interpretations?

Eva Hoffman (1989), in her memoir *Lost in Translation* depicted with great accuracy the conflicting emotions and sensations emerging from a double sense of identity which resonated with me strongly; her continuous sense of nostalgia combined with the affirmation of herself, the Self that has emerged as a result of her migration experience. *Lost in Translation* describes her Journey in terms of 'Paradise' 'Exile', and 'The New World', and the narrative explicitly thematises nostalgia. In her unique and personal way Hoffman's book combines toning and shading of the literary and critical discourse on nostalgia and expresses her complex understanding of it. According to Hoffman nostalgia is conceived as an emotion which offers the means to critique cultural practices and resist cultural assimilation, "' The sense of impending loss makes me want to hold on to what I've had with all my might'" (p.86). However, as her story evolves, the clear complex construction of her identity becomes more dominant and both nostalgia and lucidity are interlaced in her narrative,

"I have the dizzying sensation that I am a quantum particle trying to locate myself within a swirl of atoms... this is a society in which nobody gives you your identity, here you have to

reinvent yourself every day...How do I choose from Identity options available around me?"
(p.160).

The tension between having multiple '*identities*' and yet experiencing them through that same Self being and becoming is very familiar to me and resonated strongly. Could it be that the experience of multiple roots allows us a lucid look on the world and ourselves once we grasp its complexity, rather than our choosing total nostalgia and rejection of what is or, alternatively embracing the new Self while eradicating the old one?

Interestingly, in *Loosing North* Nancy Huston (2002) chooses to express her hybridity through her writing style. *Lost North* embeds many passages of an autobiographical character. Long citations from authors, newspaper commentaries, linguistic reflections, sociolinguistics, poetry and allusions to radio broadcasts so that generic hybridity appears as one of the dominant features of the text. The result is an impossible ranking which contributes to the inherently fragmented sense of self and in parallel to the fact that the reader is led to lose the thread - Huston orchestrating here a '*mise en scene*' between the disarray of the text and that of its reader. Her text is particularly representative of textual hybridity, rendered by ubiquitous play with fragmentation and plurality of voices and perspectives. Huston manages to express through her writing a deeper sense of Self, leading the reader to join her experience in a wonderful way equally open to the experienced migrant and the individual who never left his original country. By doing so she manages to communicate a unique experience. This is accompanied by a first quotation (from T.S. Eliot: *Home is where you start from*) which reflects the beginning of a voyage in relation to the concept of home. Her text constantly relates to her navigations between languages highlighting different aspects of the expression of the Self and their affective impact on the

Self – identity. The latter has strongly resonated with me, with its reflection on the reciprocity between being bi-lingual and bi-rooted, the endless connections between different parts of that experience and my own attempts at exploring these meanings.

In her book *Nostalgia, When are we ever at home* (2016), Barbara Cassin chooses to reflect on the subject of home and exile from her own experience of what she considers her adoptive country, Corsica. She chooses to mirror and reflect on her own experience compared with that of others such as Odysseus, and his coming home to Ithaca and the ambivalence of his strong emotions. The author suggests that Odysseus suffers from ‘Fernweh’ (far sickness or longing for far-off place) as well as ‘Heimweh’ (homesickness), and thus becomes the cosmopolitan hero as well as the bourgeois individual. Odysseus’ home is the entire Mediterranean of his wanderings.

The exiled Aeneas’ search for a home is carrying his fatherland on his back. His attempts to find a new Troy are doomed and fail repeatedly. It is when his nostalgia is transformed and he leaves Troy and its women behind and opens himself to a foreign marriage and a new language, that he finds a home. Cassin concentrates on the experience of exile, which is not necessarily a voluntary experience. However, in that much more frequent experience, she argues that nation and language do not need to be limited to the same or equivalent scope. In fact, quite the opposite, the elsewhere must be developed and nurtured in order for the language to remain alive and meaningful.

In his memoir *Out Of Place* (1999), Said maintained that his main purpose was to record a subjective account of an essentially lost or forgotten world, the world of his childhood until graduating from university (Said, 1999).

He writes his memoir to voice his own story, interlaced very closely with that of the Palestinian people. Yet though these political events come only briefly into view he asserts that politics did not play a conscious role in his youth or really as one of his priorities at the time of writing. In *Out Of Place* he explores the slow and strenuous development of his moral and intellectual self-identity, shaped by a life of exile, travel and immigration:

"To me, nothing more painful and paradoxically sought after characterizes my life than the many displacements from countries, cities, abodes, languages, environments that have kept me in motion all these years." (Said 1999, p 217).

Physical displacement, the adjustment to different cultures, his early life shared between two languages all contributed to a *"complicated, dense web of valences that was very much a part of growing up, gaining an identity, forming my consciousness of myself and of others."* (Said 1999: xii). It is that intrinsic duality which emerges so clearly from Said's narrative that resonated with me so strongly especially in the parallels between personal life and politics, personal narrative and national narrative, the need to position oneself in the intersection between the inside and the outside, compelled to connect intellectually and emotionally, and being simultaneously connected to various life's anchors.

"It is, therefore, a great source of virtue for the practised mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about in visible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be possible to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his."

(Hugh of St Victor, cited in Auerbach 2014, p264). Translated by Edward and Marie Said (centennial review 13, 1969 - p1-17).

2.2 Conclusion and Research Rationale

In conclusion, the literature review discussed multiple aspects of rootedness and rootlessness, being at home or homeless within geographical or emotional boundaries. Some of the contradictory aspects discussed, for example between the need for belonging versus the need to develop an open attitude towards ourselves and towards the Other and the freedom that ensues, reflect the complexity of that task. This is particularly true in relation to the *bi-rooted* individual's experience and when considering the possibility of belonging to more than one place and in multiple ways.

Furthermore, it has been interesting to explore if living with dual roots does create a phenomenon in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The juxtaposition of both roots builds a rich and more complete picture of the experience of Self. That complexity makes the subject equally fascinating theoretically and through people's lived experience.

The practical applications of the existential approach in therapy pertain to fundamental questions about our existence as citizens of the world and guests of the planet. Adopting the existential approach with clients undergoing an existential crisis due to fundamental changes in their life, such as immigration, has the potential for a transformative growth experience. It may help the individual to take a leap of faith into the unknown, free from familial and cultural constraints experienced in a foreign country or in the country of origin alike. It offers an exploration into the values, the losses and the potential gains in that process. In the attempt to explore our relationship with the vast term 'home' there is a possibility for moving beyond traumatic experiences towards empowerment and the continuous recreation of oneself.

The literature review has uncovered a mosaic of different dimensions and perspectives relating to elements of the *bi-rooted* or '*poly-rooted*' migrant's experience and illuminates the richness and complexity of that fascinating human experience. It is precisely this richness, with all the paradoxes and the innate sense of duality inherent in it that is at the heart of the research. This study has allowed me to contribute to an experiential view of these aspects, brought together through the lived experience of myself and the participants and may be an insightful addition to the subject's literature. The impact of that complex experience on the sense of Self will elaborate upon the concept of the fluidity of the Self and on the contribution of roots in the construction of the sense of Self. The research has enabled me to explore real and lived experiences in real contexts and is best represented by the following research question: "What is the lived experience of being "*bi-rooted*"? How do you experience this duality and how does each set of roots impact upon your sense of Self?"



Leandro Erlich - Uprooting installation, Argentina 2015

Chapter 3

3.1 Part 1 - Methodology and Analysis

Every research method is based on an epistemology, a position on what is knowable and how this is known. In this case, it defines what the research is looking for and the data that it is aiming to produce. In fact, the epistemology is the defining factor directing the researcher toward the most appropriate methodology in order to produce the required quality of knowledge.

Another important aspect pertaining to this is the position of the researcher and his/her personal and social context (Reed-Danahay, 2017). This raises questions concerning the character and essence of the knowledge that we would like to obtain, especially in relation to the dichotomies of insider/outsider, objective and subjective detachment and familiarity, and individual versus social and cultural nexus (Ibid). My position as a researcher lies within the overlapping aspects of the insider/outsider perspectives. Setting up a duality that privileges either account of the experience would not truthfully reflect the aims of the intended research, which reflects the view that research is both a reflexive and a collaborative enterprise, in which the lived experience of both researcher and participants is explored.

The experience of immigration and the exploration of conceptual fluid roots, their different qualities and characteristics, and the impact of this experience on individual self-perception is at the centre of my research. This subject carries a very intimate and close relationship with my own personal experience of having lived in three countries which became my home for long and significant periods of time, as well as relating to the history of my extended

family for generations, as mentioned in the introductory chapter. I explored the experience of having voluntarily migrated, while retaining strong bonds to my country of origin and laying down roots in a new country. I further explored the characteristics of these roots, the reciprocal relationship between them, and their meaning and role in the understanding of the fluidity of the Self.

3.2 Research Methods and Data Collection

“From the particular, you may ascend to the general; but from the general theory there is no way back to the intuitive understanding of the particular” (Leopold von Ranke 1795–1886).

The choice of a research method is largely based on finding one that fits and serves the research question as well as the objectives and the aims of the research. Research can be approached using either of two frameworks: the qualitative or a quantitative framework (Robson, 2002). Both have different objectives regarding the knowledge they produce (Ibid). Qualitative research aims to investigate, with rich description and the interpretation of a given experience, whilst the quantitative research concentrates on measurable parameters in order to evaluate the experience. There might be a marginal overlap of the two (ibid). The nature of this project and its personal aspect indicated that the qualitative and phenomenological exploration would suit its purpose best as my interest lies with detailed description in order to highlight the quality of the lived experience, rather than statistical analysis or measurement.

The strength of qualitative research lies in its capacity to deliver complex descriptions of the participants’ experience of the research subject (Finlay, 2008). It allows an insight into a

human perspective of an experience including the participant's emotions and personal and subjective meanings, and is related to the relationships and social/familial environment of the participants. Qualitative methods are able to expose and explore social factors, such as social constructs, gender roles etc. whose impact on the research subject might not initially be apparent (Ibid). By using this methodology I have aimed to produce a clearer understanding of a lived experience. As such, the meaning and impact on the participant is subjective within a particular social and cultural environment, rather than being perceived as objective and expressing a 'reality' that can be objectively described (Etherington, 2004).

The framework of qualitative research methods suggests a list of possible methodologies and analysis; some provide a largescale picture of social processes, while others paint a very subjective and personal account of an experience. I have opted toward the phenomenological research method as it best fits the research question and its aims. However, I chose to describe below some additional optional methods in order to demonstrate the reasoning behind my choice.

Grounded theory draws its theoretical origins from sociology, finding meaning in the interconnections between different social structures and progressions (Blumer, 1986; Dey, 1999; Jeon, 2004). The social frame is constructed in a manner that implies certain codes of conduct and various procedures are set in order to reveal social processes and interactions, and their meanings within the social situation in which they occur (Glaser & Strauss, 1998). Its aim is to understand the patterns of these processes and the relationships between them

The social aspect of the observed reality appears through the observation of behaviour and speech practices. Analysing the process which the *bi-rooted* migrant experiences and constructing a social theory around it might be interesting as a follow up to this study once

the impact on the sense of Self has been explored. However, the present aim is to explore the experience of being *bi-rooted* and of the impact of such an experience on the sense of Self. The Self as discussed above is a subjective and complex construct and is perpetually becoming. As such, it requires a subjective personal account of the experience and cannot be addressed through analysing a social construct.

Discourse Analysis was developed from linguistics, drawing its framework from studies, literary criticism, and semiotics. It concentrates on the individual achieving their personal life projects through analysing their language, the meanings which are co-created through a mutual agreement on its use. As discussed above, language both expresses and shapes our perception of reality. It further expresses social constructs that act as a means of representing a personal sense of who we are (Chandler, 2002; Lyons 1971). Thorough exploration of language may highlight the formation and preservation of social norms, of a group or personal identity, and the interaction between the social and the political (Starks, Brown Trinidad, 2007). Although discourse analysis examines the role of language in shaping and expressing socio-political and cultural traditions and contexts (Crowe, 1998; Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1991), it does not address the embodiment of the lived experience but rather encompasses a larger social description of it.

Narrative inquiry refers to the word narrative as a term which can be used for written or oral discourse and the narrative method is applied as an investigative tool in qualitative research, (Chase, 2005). It concentrates on the stories narrated by the participants (Polkinghorne, 1989) and takes as its starting point the experiences expressed and articulated by them. There are several methods in narrative research and they report on the life of a single individual using a design based on the participant's narrative being examined

as a text, a written or verbal account of an event (Czarniawska, 2004,). Narrative inquiry captures the experience in three dimensions: the personal and human dimensions of experience, the timeline and it takes account of the relationship between individual experience and the cultural context (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). This is a method through which we methodically and thoroughly collect data from the participant, analysing the story verbatim, and concentrating on language and expression. This method challenges a more traditional view of the 'truth' and the reality in which the story teller evolves (Ibid). The meaning of the experience is a subjective interpretation of the narrative and the sense of Self that emerges from it. Therefore, it represents the life of the participant as told to and interpreted by the researcher. This may sounds similar to phenomenological approach; however a certain difference may be delineated.

Narrative researchers are typically more interested in a chain of experiences as these are woven into narrative. They are not interested in the experience per se, but the manner in which people make sense of their experience via encoding it in narrative. They seek the plot, the connection of events in a semi-causal manner, and the characters that are important in this sense-making process. By contrast, phenomenology (in all of its forms), is interested in experience. People are instrumental in the uncovering of the meaning of experience.

For phenomenologists narrative is but a means to assess structures of experience, whereas for narrative researchers phenomenology is a philosophical underpinning for their approach to human experience, but not in a structural way. Human experience is viewed by narrative researchers as constituted in narrative form (Sarbin, 1986). Narrative and the way it connects various elements, sheds light on the connectivity of elements in the experience for each individual (Polkinghorne, 1988).

At the heart of this research is the participants' lived experience and the meanings and interpretations made by the researcher, especially regarding the impact of the dual experience on the sense of Self, rather than the expression of the 'told' story and its implications for understanding the experience. It cannot, therefore, limit itself to the expression of the narrated story, but rather needs a larger scope of exploration.

Though different modes of phenomenology vary in the manner in which they detach the experience from the experiencing persons at the end of the research, whether through essentialisation (Moustakas, 1990) or contextualisation, (Van Manen, 1990) in the bottom line the experience is the point of interest.

One could argue that phenomenology is in the bedrock of narrative method, whether the researcher realizes this or not. The experience as represented in the story and within its cultural context.

Phenomenological approaches concentrate on the meaning of a lived experience and of phenomenon. Its purpose is to reach a universal essence from individual experiences (van Manen, 1990). The researcher identifies a phenomenon expressed as the object which may be any pertaining to human existence, e.g. negative feelings or a problem such as sleeping disorders or undergoing an operation (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher then collects a description from the participants who have experienced the phenomenon consisting of 'what' they experienced and 'how' they experienced it (Moustakas, 1990).

The interpretation of phenomenological research has been questioned by other methodologies because of the tension between interpretation and description, the validity of examining one particular experience rather than examining a broader concept, and the

subjective role of the researcher. This has caused controversy over the validity of its methods per se (Moran, 2000) with criticisms stemming from the differences between descriptive phenomenology (Husserl, 1983) and interpretative phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962) and the lack of clarity this creates. Is the researcher part of the research or has s/he 'bracketed' his own experiences, beliefs and values while analysing the participant's experience in 'all objectivity'? However, they all agree that phenomenological research should concentrate on the phenomenon researched, while cautiously scrutinising the inherent relationship between the researcher and the researched subject (Finlay, 2009).

The objective of descriptive phenomenological research method is to reveal the essential meaning of a phenomenon (Finlay, 2009), staying true to the description of the experience, the texture, complex and multi-dimensional nature whilst avoiding preconceptions (Giorgi 1986). In contrast, interpretative phenomenology has departed from that framework and is based on the Heideggerian hermeneutic and ontological approach (Heidegger, 1962). This does not concentrate on rich descriptions of lived experience alone, but importantly, on the meaning of these descriptions in the subjective perception of the researcher, hence including that subjective perspective within the exploration (Finlay 2009). This coincides with original insights from hermeneutic traditions, which argue that any description is an interpretation (van Manen, 1990). This was taken a step further when reinforced by Langdridge (2008), who claimed that artificially laying down boundaries between descriptions and interpretations is untruthful and contradicts the essence of phenomenology.

The personal and experiential nature of my research subject and the research question lies at the heart of my choice and it was therefore very clear to me that I would choose an

interpretative phenomenological method. Although my personal involvement in the subject made me sceptical about the real possibility of 'bracketing' my experience, in contrast, acknowledging my own experience and position would transform my involvement from an obstacle into a powerful research tool, enriching and adding to the complexity of the investigation. The subjective experiences and interconnections of each co researcher (Finlay 2009) were central to the chosen research method and helped me embark upon my quest.

I was drawn to explore the Heuristic methodology described by Moustakas (1990) which piqued my curiosity and caught my interest. This method involves the researchers themselves and their experiences as a focal feature of the research which might be overwhelming. It requires a rigor of self-analysis, an enormous commitment while totally fusing with the processes and an unlimited self-exploration designed at uncovering and highlighting personal meaning (Moustakas, 1990). It acknowledges the connection between our perception of reality and our inner reflexivity, and includes emotional and mental aspects and the reality itself (Ibid). This method recognised my part in the research, not only as researcher but as being central to interpreting the phenomenon experienced by the participants as well as myself. It further encompassed my own personal development during my research which allowed me to be at ease with my double role of both researcher and *researchee*. It coincided with Moustakas' emphasis on the researcher maintaining a '*steady inward gaze*' (p.13) that enabled a profound comprehension of the phenomenon, and in the process revealed a universal experience of human nature (Sela-Smith, 2003).

The heuristic method has different steps for preparation, data collection, organisation and synthesis of the data comprising the following: engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). These stages attracted

me, and the following confirmed my early perception. In the immersion stage the researcher engages with the subject and becomes profoundly connected to the question (Moustakas, 1990). The incubation stage that follows enables an unconscious and intuitive process to surface (Polanyi, 1962) and illumination brings a new perspective to the subject, uncovering new interpretation and creating new meanings related to the researched phenomenon. In the explication stage, a process of self-searching and reflexivity takes place that will lead to the creative synthesis in which all elements will blend and form a comprehensive expression and realisation of the phenomenon.

For the data analysis, Moustakas (1990) suggests two major approaches - the modification of the Van Kaam method of data analysis and the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis respectively, hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Both methods stem from different philosophical traditions (Heidegger and Husserl) relating to the experience, the organisation and the analysis of the data and the procedural and organisational methods (Lavery, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology is represented by van Manen (1990) while transcendental phenomenology is represented by Moustakas (1990).

Meaning is central to transcendental phenomenology, which aims to obtain data that elucidates the essences of human experience. Hermeneutics necessitates reflection and interpretation of the data in order to achieve a meaningful understanding (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). However, in my opinion, both methods share enough common philosophical ground which could arguably be used in combination.

The work of Van Kaam (1966) and Colaizzi (1973) contributed equally to establishing phenomenological research.

Not all phenomenological research methods are rooted in the philosophy of either Husserl or Heidegger, although some, like theorist Giorgi (1992) developed their theory based on Husserl's purist transcendental phenomenology alone, seeing phenomenology as a descriptive science. Van Kaam on the other hand is thought to be the creator of 'empirical phenomenology', aiming to explore the meaning and structure of an experience and to concentrate on this as it presents itself. Following the descriptions of the experience by his research participants, Van Kaam proceeded to the step that he called explication; the attempt of analysing and making sense of the data. However, in the context of the research climate of the time, Van Kaam combined qualitative and quantitative design and included the participation of independent judges in order to keep track of consistency in the analytical process. Due to his philosophical orientation, he did not use a pre-set coding scheme, thus opening the possibility for various themes to emerge from the participants' interviews. He believed that their descriptions would reveal the meaning of the themes, as long as the researcher is fully open to the individual he/she is interviewing.

Colaizzi's (1973) method relies on the participants' description of the experience using a script followed by a step by step procedure when analysing the data. The result of this is a broad description of the research phenomenon using smaller samples of participants and distancing himself from any quantitative aspect. This removes the need to calculate the frequency of accounts or the intersubjective verification of the data transformation (Hein & Austin, 2001).

Immersing oneself in the data necessitates reading the text multiple times until the researcher grasps the global mood of the participant's multidimensional experience. This stage is followed by retrieving relevant statements which are later thematised in order to

encapsulate the meaning of these. The result is recognised as a 'situated structural description' since it concentrates on the participant's personal account of his concrete experience (Hein & Austin, 2001). A 'synthetic description' that conveys the common aspects of the phenomenon are then created. So, the interest of that research method lies with the commonality that emerges in the many aspects of the experience and leads the researcher to view the meaning that exposes the nature of the lived phenomenon.

Another aspect of the heuristic method is the use of the participants' own words describing the experience, and this is why it regards itself as an empirical research method (Moustakas, 1990). This method tends to be very clear about structure, design and different stages of the research. Furthermore, it involves presenting the findings in tables for these stages in order to accentuate the clarity of the design and emphasise its reliability and replicability, and by doing so accentuates the rigor of that method, rather than its creativity (Ibid).

In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenological research concentrates on analysing the texts. The researched lived-experiences are regarded as possessing their own semantic and textual structure (Hein & Austin, 2001). The results of hermeneutic research are texts and accounts presented as insights, and not as necessarily replicable in the way that the structured method suggests. The aim of hermeneutic research is the creation of an in-depth, intense and vivid account of the phenomenon in order to disclose the experience rather than to analyse it. Here the researcher is constantly reflecting on meaning and significance – from his own standpoint. Thus, it is recognized that the researcher cannot put aside embedded assumptions that are buried deeply in his/her being. Furthermore, there is a basic assumption that every phenomenon can be examined from many different perspectives and that an overall understanding will emerge from a fusion of different explorations of the same

phenomenon (Gadamer, 1976). The researcher's own experience is considered while discussing the lived experience of the phenomenon with other participants.

The research links from the particular to the general – from the particular experiences to the general essence of the phenomenon. Frequent use of literature, poetry or indeed different artistic expressions of the phenomenon are included in the research process, as although art cannot determine its essence, it might add a solid contribution to human meaning and thus lead us to a clearer understanding of a phenomenon.

The method modification by Colaizzi (1973), Stevick (1971) and Keen (1975), as suggested by Moustakas method fits well with my research aims as I am looking for the meaning of the *bi-rooted* migrant's experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Using these systematic steps seems congruent with my own attempt to balance both objective and subjective perspectives to create a comprehensive and thorough data analysis. However, despite this, the reflexive, highly creative and suggestive van Manen (1990) approach and its philosophical framework resonated strongly with me. This process relates to one of contextualisation rather than structural 'essentialisation' (van Manen, 1990) and assumes that there are many perspectives to a given phenomenon. As such there cannot be a saturation point or indeed a final analysis; the investigation is circular and continues to live in the text and in the relationship created between the reader and the text long after the specific research is over (Ibid). There is no structured step by step method per se, but there is a dynamic interchangeable relationship between six different actions: the investigation of the lived experience, the reflection of the themes, the description of the phenomenon – writing and rewriting, keeping a strong connection with the research question, and finally striking the right balance between the parts and the whole (Hein & Austin, 2001). It includes

other expressions of the phenomenon through art, poetry, prose, literature and music as a means of discovery, thus creating a larger canvas than empirical phenomenology (Ibid).

Polarising both options was not the way forward for my research and I reached the conclusion that I may not need to choose between both methods but use them in synergy. The philosophical framework of my research drew on van Manen's (1990) hermeneutical philosophy, while using the structural aspects of transcendental phenomenology as practical research tools for the analytical process. The combination of these methods together create a synthesis of different phenomenological methods (Stevick, 1971; Colaizzi, 1973; Keen, 1975; Moustakas, 1990) but also draws on the more lively and suggestive approach supported by van Manen (1990). By doing this, I obtained detailed descriptions which retained my individual voice at their core, while providing a level of abstraction which allowed an existential dimension to be exposed.

According to Moustakas (1990) the researcher describes his/her own experiences with the phenomenon – in this case the pilot study - identifying the significant statements from his/her own interview and later superimposing these onto the database obtained from participants. Then s/he clusters these statements into meaningful units and themes and synthesizes the themes into a textual and structural description. This leads to the construction of a composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience, and hopefully reaches a higher understanding of human nature.

Because of my deep connection to the research subject, which goes beyond academic interest, and my further interest in the intuitive process for collecting data, I had initial concerns about the validity of the method, the lack of boundaries and the self-rigour I was expected to display. This reflected some of the tensions amongst philosophers examined

above. However, I was reassured by Moustakas' pledge to produce an ethical and significant work with his methodology. His rigor and work ethic are best expressed in his statement that any method relating to the research subject and best assisting in data collection for the essential nature and meanings of the researched phenomena will be uncovered (Moustakas, 1990). I was also extremely impressed by van Manen's (1990) perspective on subjective research that is regarded as a never ending work in progress, including the role of the reader and his/her interpretation of it. Further reading convinced me that during the process, however personally involved and immersed the researcher feels, the research project can remain valid. Moreover, if we examine the reliability criteria using Lincoln and Guba (1985) for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as measure of reliability, it is possible to demonstrate that in its own way my research method complies with all these.

Following the six steps of Moustakas' (1990) methods, I transcribed the interviews by listening to each several times and noting down my reflections. First, I read and re-read the individual transcript in its entirety and then again and again, allowing myself to absorb freely what impacted upon me. I used the Maxqda software in order to create a digital format with which I could read the text line by line and identify 'meaning units'. Each unit was re-read in the context of the whole of the interview and of the research question. Every sentence was examined in light of how it uncovered something of the lived experience. For obvious reasons, as the reading and re-reading took place some of the information was excluded in case it was too vague or irrelevant to the research topic. However, the meanings as the analysis progressed stayed close to the language and spirit of the participant interviews.

I further re-read all texts as one unit in relation to the separate meanings, looking for possible new connections, and in parallel examined the reliability of the meaning itself. This

created hermeneutic movement from the particular to the whole and back and provided a multi-dimensional format to illustrate the complexity of the lived experience. These emergent themes are further represented by subthemes in the text, but not necessarily verbally mentioned. In a way they are the sum of the stated themes, or more a sense of what emerged from them; i.e. an underlining assumption of the position of the participants describing their experience of being bi-rooted, exemplified by their direct comments. The themes are part of one whole and intrinsically connected through subtle links, but are individually identified and separated from each other for clarity. When woven back together I found that they created a textured and multi-dimensional picture of the experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual. I used the verbatim of all the participants and that of my own pilot transcript to best illustrate the themes' descriptions. By doing so, it created a stronger connection between my experience and that of the other participants. This collaborative process best captured structurally my double role as researcher and participant.

3.3 Pilot and Participants

As stated above, this research stems from my very personal experience and reaches back into the distant history of my family. That personal aspect pointed to the choice of carrying out the research pilot study on myself and my own experience, and by bringing this to the foreground of my thoughts to help analyse it in a detached manner, while generating higher levels of reflexivity during the process. Examining my own preconceptions and assumptions contributed to the transparency and the clarity of the research. It enabled me to engage in a more open dialogue between my own experience and that of my research participants and helped to raise my awareness of my own biases, and to consciously use them or set them

aside. I was looking forward to how this experience might result in opening new horizons and finally to where that journey would take me.

According to Saunders (2012), it is necessary for a researcher to choose suitable participants in order to collect appropriate data and reach his/her objectives (in this case a lived experience of a specific phenomenon). This choice of participants enables one to gain understandings and insights (Patton, 2002) which are crucial for exploratory research, where the aim is to highlight new understandings of the phenomenon and to evaluate it from a different point of view (Saunders, 2012).

Following the pilot study of my own experience, I interviewed seven participants in order to explore the circumstances and personal experiences of their relocation, while exploring how the material was affecting me and how it challenged my own preconceptions based on my personal experience. Through this I hoped to acquire a deeper understanding of the experience of living with multiple roots and how this has been experienced by different people.

Being a woman and a mother has contributed to shaping my perception of the world, my own life, and life in general. This includes my experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual raising a child in the alien culture of a foreign land, the former becoming more familiar but never fully my own. As such it was important for me to mirror my experience with that of other women. Therefore, although I had initially envisaged a mixed gender group of participants in different stages of their lives and professional circumstances, and originating from a variety of countries and cultures, it felt more appropriate to choose a female cohort.

Motivations vary; some women may travel because they wish to be with their partners, while others seek their own path in a foreign land in order to experience a different way of life than that in their country of origin. However, all participants have chosen to stay here and raised their children here as a consequence of their relationship with long term partners. These circumstances may lead to their becoming *bi-rooted* individuals. By examining and highlighting women's experience through research we can begin to understand the particularities of women's lives (Beckman, 2014; Brown et al., 2013).

Qualitative approaches, which include in-depth conversations and group discussions, operate as a suitable medium to gain the rich details of women's stories that I seek to explore. They are valuable because they allow a holistic view of women within their evolving social, familial and personal context (Gray et al. 2015).

Although recounting women's experiences in their own terms is a hallmark of feminism (Orme, 2003), it is neither the exclusive domain nor the only approach to feminist research. Since the latter part of the 20th century feminist scholarship has increasingly involved itself in the creation of knowledge, and by doing so present a more empowering definition of reality (Sydie, 1987). This inevitably challenges masculine assumptions and therefore a feminist critique of knowledge will be challenging male abstractions, as the feminist emphasis becomes one of connectedness (Sydie, 1987; Daley, 2010). Consequently, reflexivity can be part of a research process (Daley, 2010).

However the feminist community has not provided a unified front in this discussion. A frequent dilemma for the feminist scholar is to find ways of working within some disciplinary tradition while aiming at an intellectual revolution that will transform that tradition (Stacey and Thorne 1985). Women have been challenged over their objectivity and choices of

research traditions in a similar way to those advocating a phenomenological approach in research. However as Nancy Huston and Barbara Cassin illustrated through their work described in the literature review, it is possible to transcend the accepted barriers through other mediums.

In light of the above, as a female who will be both participant and researcher exploring the values and lived reality of her subjects, my choice of all female participants felt more suitable.

So with the research being undertaken by myself as a participant, and a woman with feminist interest, I decided to make this gender choice. The interviews would reflect the participants' experience from their personal perspective as women, as is my own perspective. The decision to introduce that criterion also stemmed from the need to create another shared commonality in addition to our shared choice to immigrate. I considered that it would be helpful for the subjects to have attained a degree of maturity and reflexion that would bring insight to their experience; hence they should be at least in their late thirties, while not being at retirement age. So, these women will have had a significant length of life experience and have been living between ten and twenty years in the UK.

I wanted the participants to come originally from a country that has no intrinsic Anglo-Saxon ties in their culture, such as Canada or Australia, and to be brought up in a language other than English. It was important to me to explore the lives of women who were not raised in the Anglo-Saxon culture and spirit and that had evolved in various cultures. This was in order to minimize the impact of pre-cultural factors that may have helped familiarise them with the culture/s and English language to which they were exposed in London (as much as possible in this global and hyper-mediate world we live in).

In addition, I wanted participants originating from other cultures e.g. Eastern or south Europe, Middle East, South and Central America or Asia. In that way, they also best reflected the conditions of my own experience. Participants had different ways of laying down new roots by investing themselves in their new place of residence or may have chosen not to do so. This was achieved through their professional life or by having had children that are currently being educated here, and by creating new social circles. Their detailed experience of attempting to establish these, alongside the characteristics and the quality of these new roots, was explored equally.

3.4 The Interviews

As a practicing psychotherapist and the researcher/participant of this project and following my own interview, I was aware of the importance of creating a safe and containing environment when conducting the interviews. I would like to point out that these interview were conducted a year after the Brexit referendum, and for some of the participants the climate of uncertainty that was raised from this event is mentioned in the interviews.

Traditionally, phenomenological research relies on in depth interviews with open ended questions; therefore each interview can differ from another (Beven, 2014). Van Manen (2016) encourages more conversational interviewing. He argued that the interview method in hermeneutic interviews has two purposes. It is a means to explore and develop an understanding of the phenomenon, as well as creating a dialogue around the meaning of experience. The interviews rely on the participants' memories and reflections to help participants revisit their experiences (Crotty, 1998), but there are many other interview

formats which can potentially help researchers support participants to engage with the phenomenon as it presents itself to their consciousness.

The interviews tuned into a very personal account of each participant' story, and it felt very similar to a psychotherapy session, from their perspective as client as well as mine as psychotherapist and researcher.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations pertain to the safety and wellbeing of the participants, in order to respect their autonomy, conceal their identity and maintain their dignity as well as to obtain consent for using the material. The recruitment, consent and de-briefing forms include an explanation about the project's intentions and purpose and described the confidentiality procedures and the schedule. They also described in a few words the method of data collection and finally clearly mentioned the right to refuse to give information and the right to withdraw from the study at any given stage (Appendix 2).

The subject of the research is very personal and relates to a deep and significant experience lived by the participants. As such it might invoke painful memories and emotions that might cause distress. Therefore, the participants were given a debriefing letter with my details in case they needed further support (Appendix 4). However, I would like to point out that emotions - even difficult ones - are not necessarily detrimental to the wellbeing of the participants, but should be met with the sensitivity and empathy required in therapy, in order to create a safe environment (Finlay & Evans, 2009).

Participating in the research proved to be a positive experience for the participants, as it had been for myself, and I did receive very positive feedback following their interviews. These feedbacks were received during post-interview telephone conversations which I initiated with each participant, checking on their thoughts and feelings about the interview. So they discovered that they were enjoying recounting their experience and in addition, while reflecting upon these, found newly emerging insights and meanings. This relied upon the depth and the significance of the experience recounted by each participant.

My own interview for the pilot study was conducted by my therapist and followed the same safe and contained guidelines. This interview took place during an extended therapy session of 90 minutes using guideline questions that I had drafted and given to my therapist in advance. The themes discussed were those often explored at length during my therapy sessions and although I was fully aware that this was no usual session and that the content of our conversation would become the basis of the pilot project, I tried to be as honest and open as possible. Although the subject matter, my experiences and their impact were familiar to both of us, I attempted to weave these into a fresh account during the interview by answering the questions spontaneously (Appendix 1).

An ethical concern for me lay with the personal aspect of my research and the involvement of my nuclear family, as well as my present one. Although they are not active participants in this project, some aspects of my personal input might impact upon them; with my possibly disclosing information about our familial history that they would have preferred to be kept private. Asking their consent and sharing with them the very personal research method that I have chosen was the first step forward. It is important for this consideration to be present

in my mind all the way through the project, and as it resurfaces throughout the research it will need my careful attention.

Being the initiator and researcher of this project, my name will appear alongside any publication of the project itself or its findings or any material connected to it. Therefore, any attempt to conceal fully my own identity and protect the identity of my family may be at least partially compromised. That is the reason that full transparency during the process would be required.

The interviews were recorded on a digital device; then copied and stored on my protected personal computer for my later transcribing. The transcript stage familiarized me with the material and meant that I could remove details to preserve anonymity. It also allowed me to reflect on their experiences while transcribing and recording my reflections. Some of these were used when relevant to the research and to my position as both researcher and participant. All identifying information on the participants or their significant others as well as the information regarding my significant others was changed. However, in the pilot interview, although I kept the details identifying significant others in my life as minimal as possible, my own name as the researcher is used.

Chapter 4

4.1 Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The findings of this research are presented in two parts. The first of these consists of the personal story of each participant. These will be followed by the description of the emergent themes and of the sub themes from which they were created. In the second part of this chapter I will present the results of my interpretative analysis and discuss the individual themes.

As with all the participants, I have personally been shaped and influenced in the way that I experience and carry myself in the world through the process of relocation, developing new roots, and becoming a *bi-rooted* individual. My personal experience is therefore an integral part of my researcher's perspective. Thus, this analysis reflects my experience of the participants' stories and the way they have resonated with me during the interview and analytical process. This research is an attempt to enter into a profoundly enigmatic and subjective realm, which purposefully steers away from certitudes and enters the realm of exploration. It sometimes follows my predecessors researching this subject and sometimes follows new paths and new perspectives, thus aiming to contribute to the understanding of that phenomenon (or indeed perhaps adding confusion to it).

Starting this chapter with each personal lived experience is essential to understanding the phenomenon, as these stories contribute another layer to the multiple dimensions of the complex experience. The interviews provide a refined version of these personal, life-changing stories.

Moving to London was not planned as a permanent move for any of the participants. Thus, they did not struggle to reach the decision, or prepare themselves psychologically and practically for this experience. They followed their heart and their intuition. However, this move has changed the course of their lives, and has transformed them into *bi-rooted* individuals.

Uncovering the refined versions of these personal experiences is not only important in its own right but supplies the frame upon which to crystallize and contextualise the subsequent analysis. The stories are not used as a basis for narrative analytical methods and ideography but are giving a sense of the personal experience as a background for this research. These accounts were crafted based on my perception of the participant's experience, and reflect my interpretation of each one of them and how their stories resonate with my own experience. This process matches the creative synthesis stage of the heuristic method (Moustakas, 1990) in which all elements will blend and form a comprehensive expression and realisation of the phenomenon. Each story opens with a poem or a strophe from a poem, a prose passage or a picture that best encapsulates and illustrates my perception of the participant's experience.

All the personal details of each individual have been altered in the descriptions of the individual stories, which are told in my own words interspersed with verbatim quotes from the original interviews. Pseudonyms are used and geographical details changed. In addition, some of their family details have been used in altered form for illustrative purposes. All of this is designed to keep the relevant descriptions, texture and details while safeguarding confidentiality. However, all details reflect the physical, emotional and psychological

characteristics that are of importance in the description and which contribute to my understanding of the individual's experience.

4.1 Part 1 - Personal Experiences

Eva



2017 ClipartXtras

I love the woe that proves me strong;
That shadow of fate which all ye throng,
O ye to whom high hearts aye bow, --
Faith, Virtue veiled, stern Dignity,
And thou, proud Exile, Liberty,
And, nobler yet, Devotion, thou!

Victor Hugo (THE EXILE'S CHOICE, 2009)

Eva's roots are firmly planted both in her country of origin and in her present country of residence in London UK. According to her description, each set of roots is different and plays a different role in the construct of her sense of Self. However, the two sets of roots are somehow complementary to each other, allowing her to become the person she wants to

be, while in parallel staying attached and loyal to the values she grew up with. Her description of both sets of roots are very different, but both contribute equally to the person she has become. Transforming London into a home has occurred organically during her stay despite experiencing difficulties at the start.

"I don't know how it happened, I really like this country; this is my home"

Her experience of relocating herself in a new country was closely described as a process of self-discovering aspects of her personality that she was not aware of.

"10 years ago, I was completely different. Very shy, I had many complexes; I thought that cannot achieve more; that I should speak out loud what I want to do. But when I came here, I learned to be in a different way. People want me to speak my mind, try something new. I can go and do anything I want. But would have stayed in my country of origin, I would not find that different side of me that I found here in the UK".

Adapting to her new life was challenging and her leaving her country of origin behind proved to be difficult.

"It was scary, I[had] never gone far from home, ever in my life. Left everything behind family, country and moved here with a man I known for a couple of months really..."

Amongst the difficulties she encountered, mastering the English language was high up on her list.

"I felt that my tongue was stuck in my throat and that I can't say anything. And when I finally said something people didn't understand me."

Eva now speaks English fluently but still feels more comfortable in her original language. As she said, her self-discovery led her to realizing aspects of herself that she had not suspected she had while living in her country of origin. However, the delicate fabric that Eva started weaving in her new life appeared to be fragile, and every big step such as having her children has proven to reopen her sense of alienation.

“That was a hard time, I was thinking about my home, I was thinking about my parents, friends and brother but I did not have the feeling that I missed them before my son was born but after he was born this feeling appeared”.

However, the birth of her children was experienced as a turning point. She now has a stronger sense of building a life here. Investing in her new life while keeping strong ties with her country of origin resulted in her experience of living with multiple “homes” but not necessarily in a conflictual way: *“London feels like home and my country of origin feels like home so that actually I have two homes[in] the two places... ”*

She is aware of the confusion that her duality can generate, but the way she expresses it does not entail negative emotions regarding that confusion, as she is trying to explain the difference between both countries and what is her experience of both.

“I know it is very confusing, sometime, I am confusing myself. It is hard to say. People here are more focused on themselves, I don’t want to call them selfish, it is not this way, but they care more about themselves. Many times, I have been told not to look at others, this is your decision why are you bothered by others. But I can’t [help it] this is the way I was brought up and this is how I am. It does not go together...”

Her sense of duality is expressed in a balanced way, but it is a dynamic sense and at time she feels she can contain it easily. Other times she feels that she is torn between both countries.

“It is the same kind of seeing clearly the good and the negative side...As a foreign national living in London and spending her holiday there.... I do feel torn between the two countries... but it is not something persistent that is active every day...So, part of me is there but I could not pack myself and go back there now, I just could not. Part of me is here, I live here my life is here my kids are here and I really happy to be here. But this sensation of two worlds does not give me a headache. It is just what it is between the two. “

Eva cherishes this new version of herself and that she has become able to express different aspects of herself when she is here and when she is there. This complexity has become part of who she is, and she can carry it with her no matter where she is:

“When I go to there I have to remind myself that it is a different country and their approach is different. I need to accept it...that the way it is...and I have changed, 180 degrees. ... I really like myself now and I don’t put a mask or anything, I am just me”

Her experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual is viewed by her as a transformative experience, from which she can exercise her own choices in building up a coherent version of herself which includes both.

“... [My country of origin] has given me values, it gave me this feeling of what is right and wrong, very clearly, there is no fifty /fifty. And England gave confidence, gave me freedom of choice taught me that I can do what I want and when I want if I want. And when I mix it together, I think, it is a pretty good mix because I think the way I developed over the year, it is a good thing that this happen to me. Because, I don’t even want to know what kind of me I

would be if I did not come to England. I left behind all that was maybe not wrong but restricting me. So, I took the best [a strong sense of right and wrong, my moral values]. That's the best that I retained from there, and I took every opportunity that England gave me to develop myself and move forward."

Within that fluid way of experiencing the duality of her roots, she is able to experience her roots in a very graphic and visual way, allowing the space for each set to evolve, whilst being fully aware of their contributions to the person she has become in the present; that person she would not have become without the experience which has shaped her perception of the world and more crucially her perception of herself.

"Because in there I left everything behind, I left my family, my parents, husband's parents, brothers and sisters, friends, the roots in there are so deep, they always been there, and they are always going to be there. Whereas in here, we started something new, it is a fresh small tree, you know, and my country of origin a massive, massive tree. Massive roots and small ones. We don't have our all family here; we are just developing our own family here. So, our roots in here are very shallow. There are two home, I have two homes, but they are different. I don't feel, I can't say that it is similar at all. Because there, there is a history behind, many generations behind us, you know, here, we started this, it is a fresh start. We are the first ones here, we started the history, there no one before us. We call it home here, we call it home there, but it is completely different, Just different way. Our families are there, and their roots are going deeper and deeper, they will have their new families, so it will always be there, and their children... we started something here and we don't know how it is going to be. How it will develop. Whether we will stay here or not or move that tree back to our

country of origin. So, at this point, I really don't see similarities [between both homes] a part of calling both places home."

Viola



"I am more connected to London and living here, this connection deepened once I had kids, I feel more rooted here in my life than I feel in my homeland."(Viola's interview)

Viola moved here following her husband, who had been offered a job here. She has set down roots in the UK and although she is connected to her country of origin, she is not considering ever going back to live there. But she is conflicted when thinking of her country of origin and vacillates between clearly deep attachment and dismissing it altogether. This ambiguity is present throughout her story and she became aware of it during the interview. Eventually, she recognises being more attached to her country of origin than she cares to admit, but that ambiguity does not cloud her clear choice of staying in the UK and bringing

up her children here. She exposes them to her original country but does not really believe that they might be tempted to go back there at some point. Her experience of spreading her wings is accompanied by a considerable sense of freedom in her actual choices, but when spending time in her country of origin she feels more beautiful and powerful than when she is here. Scratching the surface brings up a complex picture allowing Viola herself to reflect on her relationship with both sets of roots and their impact on her. She was determined to make the move successful and she found a job she loved. However, fitting within the social circle of her co-workers proved to be challenging due to the different attitudes she brought with her. Eventually Viola, invested herself in her new life and in her job, realising that being herself will serve her better than trying to fit in.

" well, I think over time I came to the realisation that I cannot pretend forever..."

For her, she very quickly prioritised the choice of staying in the UK as a country of opportunities in which she could reach self-actualisation and the life style to which she aspired. These took precedence over the emotional ties that may or may not connect her to her country of origin.

"I would find it very difficult to go back, because I don't know what kind of work environment I will go back to.... Whenever I considered it, I was always at loss as what I will be doing there...So, I think, if we had to go back now it would be very difficult and quite alien to me. And as much as I like going back to see family and friends, I don't think I would like to go back and live and work there... it is still my country of origin"

She is not denying her connection to her country of origin but is aware of the limits of this connection. *“So, I definitely, feel strong connection, familial connections but friends wise I think once parents are gone that is it.”*

Furthermore, She and her husband have elected to become British citizens, and by doing so, have clearly made a significant choice that carries implications beyond that of a technical travel title (passport). And yet, there is a fine line between identifying herself as the person that lives in England and the person that has originated elsewhere.

“it is really weird, because we always travel on our British passports and I always feel that it is strange. Because the moment that I go through passport control, we obviously speak in our original language to each other, and the guy will look at the British passports and say hello in our language, and we reply and it kinds of feel fake that I am travelling with a British passport and I am blatantly local. ...it is really strange, when I travel back...it is really weird, I don't really feel...well I am local...and I may feel local, but I certainly see everything through my British experience.”

Yet she is still debating her sense of identity, in the connective space where the official and subjective identity meet and clash together simultaneously.

“I would say I am [my original nationality] with a British Passport. At the heart of heart, I feel that I am my original nationality...Exactly, I feel just that I am not English. I am a person here.... I was born there and have all the experiences that came with it. I still feel alien when we talk about our origin but at the same time I feel rooted here because my working experience is here, and my actual life is here...., I genuinely feel that I am my original nationality, I will never say that I am British, but I have a British passport. I live in London and it also part of my identity.”

In contrast, Viola is finding herself having strong emotional reactions to her country of origin's political situation; her tone changes and her pragmatic way of being shifts to a different mode.

"I get more upset when I am back, if something does not go my way, or if something irritates me, and I think it is easier to adapt and change my views when I am here. I am settled here, and I want to stay here, so I am more open to whatever changes are coming my way."

Her ambivalence towards her country of origin is best expressed during her visits there, where paradoxical emotions and thoughts collide with each other. She is aware of changes in the way she perceives herself, and also some physical sensations.

"I always feel lighter when I go there, I almost feel slimmer if it is all possible, I feel that people perceive me as looking better there. And when I come here and back to my own... But when I come back, and I usually stand in front of my door, I always feel happy to be back. Because in a way I do feel that this is my place. I love my house, I love what I do, the whole life that I have set up for myself."

She has settled into being *bi-rooted* and her life here is associated with freedom.

"I can have a bit of a more freer life doing what I love doing here. And most of our friends, who almost all are in a similar financial level and our kids go to same schools. I no longer feel, I am a certain nationality, and people will judge me in a certain way"

Experiencing herself in the two places is very different. She relates to the experience of being herself here as more authentic than when she is in her country of origin, although with time she is reaching a more comfortable balance.

"I think I came to terms with it now. But I think for quite a long time, it was almost like being two different people. Like being an actress that goes and plays a role and then takes her mask [off] and is a bit more herself... Whenever we are going back...there are different masks for different people. "

And she has a clear view of the different connections in both countries and how this affects her in the way that past, present and future are representing a process of development.

"...It is on so many different levels, that it is hard to describe... I am more connected to London and living here, this connection deepened once I had kids...I feel more rooted here than I feel in my homeland. There it is more connection with the family. We like travelling there and staying there in our flat."

Her inner sense and her experiences shift and changes. She has clearly made a home in the UK, but at least one occasion made her realise that it still feels sometimes as if they are in total isolation, especially in times of crisis. So Viola is living the life she wants in a way that seems stable and anchored, but this contrasts with a sense of fragility that is felt throughout our conversation.

" Yes, it is feeling that I have [an element of fragility], as if nothing is taken for granted, it may be completely ungrounded, and everything might be the same, but that is the feeling that I have...moving is such a big upheaval."

The meaning of being *bi-rooted* for Viola, stems from her outlook on the freedom she experiences here in choosing the life she wants to live; however, her frame of references varies according to the context of her thoughts, which allows her a fluidity of being that is implied in her discourse but not always explicitly mentioned.

"It depends on the experience as well (context) because the memories, or the words may trigger feelings that I felt when I was still there, my reference is going back, to how I was and how I felt, how it was like when I was there. I lived longer there than I lived in the UK, but my mature life was in the UK, it feels more like, more meaningful experiences have come from living in the UK. So, I think my point of reference is almost always going back to our lives there rather than our life in there...These things that people here have in common, I don't have any reference to it because it was not my experience. on the other hand, I feel more English because of my working life... It is almost half, it depends which part of my life it refers to. I have to put my original glasses on or English glasses on."

Isadora



vectorfusionart/Depositphotos.com

"I am a seed that grew there and here I am a plant that has been transported and re-rooted here. And I can be transported elsewhere, because once you have been uprooted once then you can do it again, but you will always be a seed once.... Hence the freedom..." (Isadora's interview)

Isadora initially came to London in order to spend a few months on her way to a big trip across Asia. During those months she met her husband to be, a national foreigner. They got married and settled here for their new life together. She is very aware of this moment and of the choice that she made. She has had her children here and has set root in this city. She feels comfortable in her life here but still very connected to her country of origin where she still has family and friends. Her experience of beginning here is more like an adventure.

From the start of the experience Isadora felt the sense of duality. The beginning was a combination of a sense of loss with a sensation of freedom and opportunities. This duality is shifting and changing as her new roots are becoming more established, not in their existence per se but more in the way this duality expresses itself.

" There are elements of both. There was a loss... I mean I do have that feeling now... But sometimes I find it a bit scary that this [is] not as strong as it used to be... it is fading away, yeah... when you feel that you live with one foot here and one foot there and suddenly you notice that one of those feet is becoming more and more detached."

Isadora's sense of belonging is strongly expressed throughout her story, and yet there are no negative emotions attached to it. It is as though longing has become her way of being and episodes of things happening in her country are a constant reminder of her connections.

"I do miss people... I feel some longing for my country... you know... when [something terrible happens], I suffer...this pain for your country.... This gives me nostalgia."

Her connection to her life here and her awareness of her roots here are becoming stronger, but eventually the expression of her duality moved from the realm of the living to the realm of the dead, while keeping both clearly in the picture. This strong image illustrates that the

permanent sense of dual attachment that is so intrinsic to her life will follow her to her eternity.

"I want to be cremated... I obviously want some in (ashes) there... but I guess I want to [be] here as well. So yes, that is me, and my ashes will be here and there, I guess this is me..."

Her experience is that her dual roots are in synergy with each other, both are part of her sense of Self. But each has a different role in her inner construct. This includes her inherent early opportunities and experiences and the freedom to use them the way she wanted when she moved away from her country. The potential freedom and the responsibility that ensued is strongly emphasised in her story all along.

"I feel like my time in [my country of origin] was a time that little by little, years by years different cards were given to me. Like in poker game. Like things happened, things were put in my life. And then I had a full game in front of me. And then I took all these cards and I came to London and that is where I played. I played them... I was responsible for myself... For my life, my freedom... it was for me to play the cards that were given to me, I did not choose the cards that were given to me, but I choose how to play them, when I came here..."

Her experience of her roots in her country of origin is described as strongly meaningful, both deep and yet restrictive and limiting, and yet her sense of Self is intrinsically connected with her original roots and so is her deep emotional attachment to the place and the culture, some elements of which are embodied in physical and sensorial impressions:

"My land, my country, in so many subtle ways it is woven... it is a sensorial experience because my souvenirs [memories] from there are full of images, smells, colours and music....I almost feel like I only need to close my eyes, and smell it and that I will be transported to my

country..., these are the things I miss, they are in the essence, they exist only in there and nowhere else."

There is a sense of belonging within both places but in different ways.

"I really feel I belong to London. I am not sure it is so imbedded in me the way my country of origin is. The emotional attachment is very big.... The connection to my country of origin is far beyond the day to day life, something more essential from the words essence.... it is primal, almost visceral ...

She developed and matured over the years here, all of which happened in English. As a result, she became aware that English has become both the language she uses professionally and at home with her husband, impacting directly on her sense of Self and carrying real meaning.

"Over the last years I grown up a lot and I have grown up in English, if you understand what I mean... so yeah... I guess it [my language of origin] does not come to me as easy as it used to... I don't know... somethings like very particular words that I have learned in English and are related to an inner experience."

She speaks to her children in her language of origin, but English with her husband, creating in effect a double intimacy with both languages.

"I relate to my children in [my language of origin] and that is such an intimate relationship, but to my husband, I do it in English and that is also very intimate.

It is important to her to make sure that her children understand the significance of her origins and how much these are part of her.

"Some things have their own way of being, but we can't always see them. it has very big impact, it is true I can see that it is so important that I want to pass it[on]. I want them to know. It is part of them because they are ... and I guess that is also a part of me and I want them to know what that means. It is not just a random country...."

Her description of her double set of roots is very visual and vivid.

"I know that I am attached to here, it feels more like I earned it. That is the feeling, that I earned it which is very different from the roots that I have there. Using the root metaphor, I am a seed that grew there and here I am a plant that has been transported and re-rooted here. And I can be transported elsewhere. Because once you have been uprooted once then you can do it again, but you will always be a seed once.... Hence the freedom... but then I belong in other ways. I am thinking about how I reorganise myself here because I don't feel unrooted here. But I don't feel my roots are as deep as they been once there. Here it is more expansive; it is more connected, a different movement. Not so shallow, I feel grounded and solid here. I don't feel my attachment is shallow this is more like an Ivy, it is in movement all time. It is more like Oak there, Ivy here."

This ability to shape and reshape herself into different versions is an important feature of her *bi-rooted* experience. It has contributed to the richness of her life emotionally. She does not experience this as being torn apart or in a state of limbo but on the contrary as something she has managed to incorporate into her sense of Self.

"I feel so privileged; it is a privilege to be in that situation. I got the best of both"

"I am free, that is how I see it, I am free! I can have a bird's eye view of things."

However, she is aware of the price tag attached to this way of life and that the choice she is constantly making by staying here means living with constantly ongoing uncertainty.

“But then yeah it comes with a price tag attached, and it comes with a lot of fears as well and anxieties about the future and a lot of uncertainties which I don’t think about because I think it would drive me crazy.”

Being able to hold these elements in such a way encapsulates her awareness of the freedom and limitations of this situation.

“The privilege and the difficulty, it is because you need to think, and you need to take decision, and you grow because you do that, because you go through these periods of reflections. [It is] the flip side of the benefit that makes it difficult. Some people see one side some see the other, but it is a matter of how you decide to deal with it. [my life here] is created it is not primal but a very real mirage.”

Greta



Where do I Belong - Baraka1

Where do I belong?
Where is my home?
I am not like the people of my parents country
And I am not like the people of the country I was born
I do not share their ideals
I do not share their skin
I have a faith.
Which only complicates me
Pulling me in all different directions
Tugging at my sanity
Neither get along
So where do I belong?
Now I know
My answer is not here because my question is wrong
My faith and countries are a part of me
I do not belong in one category,
So do not stereotype me
Because I am kaleidoscope
You can't see just one way
But you have to see me through the whole way
I belong here
I am not missing a home,
but people are pushing me out of my home
People are confused by my kaleidoscope
They want to conform me
But I am unconformable
My home doesn't change
Where I belong, does not need to be answered
People need to accept me, respect me
That is where I belong

Greta moved to London in order to learn English and also because at that point in her life she was looking for a challenge. Her initial plan was to spend three to six months here – this happened ten years ago. She had accomplished her studies and set up a successful business in her country of origin and felt that this was a chance for her to discover something new. She met her husband, a British national and decided to remain in London permanently. Since

her daughter was born, she is more aware of the duality in which she elected to live but feels that this way of being has allowed her to develop in a way that she would not be able if she chose to be mono-rooted. Both sets of roots are different in many ways, but her rootedness resides within herself and her family here.

“London was so different, I don’t know anyone here, there is no security net, it was completely the opposite. I think I was tickled by that and decided to give it a try.”

Her experience of being bi-rooted is vividly expressed through her perspective on living in multiple languages.

“At the beginning, I was translating but I always liked English, so it felt natural when I started feeling more comfortable, I started to read in English, then I started to speak in English then I started to dream in English. one day something happened when I was at school and my tutor was talking and I had this weird moment thinking to myself, why is speaking in my language, because for some reason my brain was re writing itself, and because I understood everything, I thought he must be speaking in my language. It was a moment, and then I realised of course he is speaking in English he can’t speak my language.”

However, Greta’s experience of herself in both languages is totally different. In fact, because she uses different levels of English, and because her mother tongue is a local dialect of the national language which she also speaks fluently, she experiences herself in multiple ways in multiple languages. Each language is vibrating differently in her, but the true intimacy lies with her original language.

“...There are certain types of colouring, or little spaces of emotional times that you can have in a day, that is not necessarily deep, when you want to describe that pleasure that you have

or your morning coffee, that moment that you are not worrying and being really in the present. I will use my dialect to do that. “

Greta experiences being *bi-rooted* as a complex state of being which arouses complicated emotions. Both roots are connecting to each other in the ways she relates to being in both places.

“I am definitely my original nationality and will always be. My other life here is present and it comes up. It is part of my presentation, part of my persona. All my values, my way of thinking was formed there... at the same time there are things that I did like and others that I really rejected, and I find that here people think closer to how I do.”

She values both the versions of herself here and there, but her present experience of Self is allowing her to pursue her own self-discovery.

“I am still striving for authenticity. Existentially it is the most difficult thing to achieve. I am really trying to be myself, I strive for that but here at least I can try”.

So, she values the freedom her life here is giving her, but is painfully aware of the difficulty of separating from the people she loves.

“But every time that they leave I find it very difficult and I become very emotional...So, when they leave, I find myself with emptier house, and it is more difficult to deal with. (crying) .“

Her roots in her country of origin are strong and it is this anchor that allowed her to grow wings, but she had to come here to evolve and develop.

"I suppose that [having strong roots in my country of origin] allows me to be and become what I want and if I did not have that... [it would not happen]. I have an emotional engagement. In England it is different it is a lot more ...maybe actualisation sort of... which is very important for the individual....It is almost like I am trying to hold who I am, I am trying to become who I am, and I am doing it here rather than in my country of origin, I think it would not be possible there".

Greta's life is not free of doubts and ambiguities regarding her choices and her *bi-rooted* experience can reach a point where the experience becomes surreal at time.

"Sometimes I would wake in the middle of the night and I think, what have I done, what am I doing here... why am I here? Almost with bewilderment that I have really done it! This is my life? Whose life is it?... it feels that I am undecided. I think it put more pressure on you when you move because I have chosen this and if it sucks I have chosen it".

Being *bi-rooted* has not only enriched her life but has exposed her to challenges that have allowed her to grow and evolve into the person she wanted to be.

"A privilege definitely, because I have two perspectives on life and it would be as good to have as many as possible, I know two quite well, I can read in two languages, I have more choices, I have my original passport, I could have an English one, that I never thought I will need but things are changing. So definitely a privilege. I think being an Anglo-Saxon culture has opened that world to me that I did not have access to in my country of origin. But I am really happy with my [original] roots."

Her daughter was born here, and it is important for Greta that she will enjoy the freedom to choose what she wants to be in the future, without burdening her with her cultural heritage.

She would like her to be connected equally to both cultures, but she knows it will be her child's choice. She, herself, has a strong sense of belonging to both countries. But as she has also developed roots within herself and her new family, she feels she could retain this sense and move if necessary.

"I belong with myself, so I can entertain the possibility to move from London Home is here inside me. With my daughter and my husband of course"

Greta describes moving from one country to the other as stepping from one world to another. Both places have a sense of home. However, despite this, her roots here still have a temporary aspect, and although she is aware that she may stay here, she contemplates the possibility of moving and is aware that she will always have a country of origin whose roots will remain with her wherever she goes.

"My home is here now, but it is not as engrained and rooted as in the way that hometown is. I could change London with another city that offers me whatever London offers me, and probably I will stay here till I die. But I could never have substituted my country of origin, how could I? I can't..."

Similarly, her sense of belonging is one that expands beyond one place without exclusivity.

"A little bit of both. I think that because I like many other people was able to unroot myself, pluck myself from another life in another place. People who live in one place makes them feel that they have one root. Whilst, I feel that I can more and if I had a hundred lives I have a hundred roots. Therefore, I belong in London, I belong in Italy and I belong nowhere because I belong everywhere."

Marina



Daniel Hakim 1995

"This is our home away from home" (Marina's interview)

Marina has been living in London for the last 15 years. She is married to a foreign national, and her children were born here. At the time of the interview she was weighing up her future options; she would like to go back to her country of origin but at the same time her daily life is very anchored here. She is aware of the duality and is quite conflicted about it.

Her adaptation period here was not easy, as she left behind a full life. But she remembers also the joy of exploring a new city as a young couple, despite the feeling of alienation that went with it.

"Coming to London was obviously like wow! Such a big metropolis and all very different people and then I struggled to fit in...and needed to adapt and that took me a while, and also the fact that I did not have any social connections, family and friends, that was difficult."

Marina remembers experiencing a loss of her sense of self during her adaptation period; having lost her points of reference she started questioning all aspects of herself within this loss.

“Not knowing in what direction to go. So, I was trying all kind of different things. To find a job, or not, but nothing seemed to be working so I became sadder and sadder... I regretted leaving my life behind. It was lonely, I felt lonely for many months.”

Marina starts her description of her identity with no sense of duality, but as our conversation evolves things proves to be more complex. Marina still defines and identifies herself as being her original nationality and does not feel her identity is tied to the UK.

“I don’t need to be English, and I don’t need a permit for anything. I don’t feel English at all, even though I have been here for 14 years. I have many English friends, but I don’t identify myself as English. My background is very strong to me and I am very proud of it.”

She feels very rooted in her country of origin and sometimes quite defensive, and does not see her stay here as having dented or impacted her original roots.

“The whole culture that I have in my backpack. I lived there, I grew up there, and I have my family. These are all the fillers that make me who I am. That who I am, I am not English. Obviously, I have a connection to England, because, I live here, and my children are English, but certainly, I don’t feel any more English ...”

She feels very comfortable expressing herself in English and using both languages is natural to her. She still expresses herself differently but does not feel that this makes her appear fundamentally different.

"I will express myself in a different way [in each of the languages]. In my mother tongue I will be more expressive, but I don't think I am different person."

Her sense of home is strong and emotionally and unequivocally connected to her country of origin. But when she describes her experiences of visiting there, a sense of ambivalence starts to surface that she herself notices has become more apparent.

"It is not my city anymore in the sense that I don't recognize the places that were to me like anchors. The feeling is still there, but the buildings, the shops the restaurants are all gone. It is a city that changes incredibly quickly... I realise I don't know, I have not lived there in the last fifteen years. I feel more detached from the place but as attached to the people who are really driving me into going there...this is home to me."

Her experience of living in London is ambiguous, a mix of understanding the advantages on both personal and general levels, and yet emotionally struggling to make peace with it. This is amplified by the person she feels she has become as a result of the difficulties encountered while living in London.

"We have benefited from being in London for many years ...but I wonder now.... I think it made me stronger, because the beginning was not easy... I am probably a different person; it would have been easier to say in my original city, it would have been an easier lifestyle... I would have been a more relaxed mother, a less rushing person if I had stayed there.... London is a much bigger and difficult place to live in as a foreigner obviously especially as a woman, as a mother...I think it is a constant little fight to get where you want to in London."

The sense of freedom experienced when she had just moved here with her now husband became restricted as she started investing in her life here and this has increased since she

has had her children; The lack of family support is experienced on many levels and is mentioned quite often in her story.

“I still remember coming back home with the baby and thinking and now what?! I have no idea what to do with children, I will be here on my own without family to help... I find myself again alone but with a baby”.

She learned to adapt and to overcome the difficulty, but she recognises that the children might not have enjoyed the same standard of education in her country of origin. For her, giving them a good education has been paramount. Furthermore, she is also happy with the multicultural aspect of living in London and its benefits for her children.

Marina is conflicted with her sense of belonging that shifts along a continuum of belonging and non-belonging and in trying to make sense of that continuous movement. However, her living here has become part of her identity and she identifies herself now as a foreigner living here.

“I feel I belong here because we have been here for many years, but I don’t feel I identify with that nationality [British]. And this paper means something... [but] I think we belong into place now, after so many years... sometimes I feel I belong into the two places, other times I feel completely comfortable here or there and then something happens like those terrorists’ attacks, and I think, what am I doing here, I don’t belong here, and I am risking my children’s life. And then I go back there, and I think, I don’t recognize myself here”.

Her experience of her roots is described with clarity and with it the dualism she is experiencing and the emotional impact it has on her.

“My originals [roots] are much deeper, they are the one you can’t remove, and they are always there. They reach far, much farther than any other roots. And the London roots I always thought that they are temporary, even after years...they are exchangeable. So, they are not that valuable.... Maybe my original roots are roots of a tree and the London ones are shallow branches... the definition of myself varies according to the context when I say I live in London? ... There is a sense of pride in that, yes”.

Transferring original traditions into her life here is bridging the duality and connecting both worlds.

“I consciously keep all our traditions... it is not a plan, it is not as cold as that, but it is part of us and of our culture...it is worth passing them to the children whether it qualifies as planned or not I don’t know”.

Her living as a *bi-rooted* individual has impacted upon her way of being and sometimes has increased her internal conflicts and paradoxes but it has offered her an alternative perspective and alternative values with which she is entertaining an ongoing dialogue.

“It gives me another perspective to things, and it adds another culture...We learned many things from being here...I think I was always open to others but living here gives me another perspective. ...So, for that I am grateful, and London offer so much in those terms...And that is another thing you find when I go back home. I find people there a bit provincial. I always feel they should go out more and see the world, instead of being focused only on themselves...The emotional belonging is still there it is a given and I am still attached to the place, but...I don’t know how I would adapt if I was to go back... ”.

Her sense of being at home here is becoming clearer and it does not overlap with a higher sense of belonging to a nation or a country with which she has made peace and has found her way of holding both.

“Home in the sense of the house you live in definitely, and I hope our home is for our boys their home in the sense of an emotional home. For me the emotional home is still there. But our little family home is here. Home of where my childhood was and where my belonging is, but our family home and where the four of us are and want to be is here. I have two different levels of homes.... but know we are settled here.”

Sofia



Ido Paul 2014

The Fear of not belonging
There's always that moment
When you feel as though you're about to break
As If you're slowly crumbling to pieces
And no one bothers to pick them up and rebuild
You have no one to trust,

No one to turn too,
Not even yourself,
For you know what you're capable of
So your on your own,
Completely lost,
Yet you know exactly where you are,
You've been here your whole life
You don't belong here
You're trapped,
You need to get out
And find yourself
You run,
But in every direction
Is your worst fear
the fear of not belonging anywhere
So what are you going to do?
Stay trapped?
Or face your fear
And live
by UtterlyAlive Aug 10, 2013

Sofia has been in London for the last 20 years. Her husband is half English, their children were born here. Sofia is still struggling to make sense of her life here and to come to terms with it. She has not found a way to connect and invest in her life here or to decide to go back. Her 'stuckness' in this state of limbo is expressed throughout the interview and is the most striking aspect of her experience of being *bi-rooted*. For her this experience is rather one of being up-rooted.

It became clear during the interview that she was aware of holding onto her dream of returning to her country of origin, but that this longing and indecision was preventing her from fully engaging in her life here, and from constructing a meaningful environment. At the time of the interview she had graduated from a professional training program which was very important for her and she could already feel some shifting of her sentiments towards her life in London.

Her original plan was for a temporary stay, and she thought she would be fine and that there was no need to reflect upon it too much at the time. But this limited period has extended to almost twenty years and yet she still feels totally estranged from her life here. The problems were apparent from the start; she felt her English was not good enough and she experienced difficulties connecting with the place at all levels.

"I remember it was hard for quite a while, to move around and feel comfortable. I was uncomfortable. I remember, asking the conductor about the ticket and thinking oh my god he is not going to understand me, and I am not going to understand him, and that situation would stress me a little bit...."

When she realised that she had to own being a foreigner, she relaxed into being one. On a personal level, she did not invest herself in her life here; she did not look for a job because she felt too self-conscious and not confident enough to do so.

"I had a good level of English but not enough to open up to English people. When I am with several people I still find difficult to keep up, I don't feel confident enough to express my ideas."

She has not reached a clarity regarding her sense of Self. She feels a rift between her inner reality and her life here and feels very much an outsider.

"I would struggle to define myself, I would say, I have 2 kids and I live in London."

Whilst she can appreciate some of the local values, she is still seeing them as foreign and alien to her and her own set of values based on her cultural upbringing.

" ... the English and especially how they deal with family as opposed to us, we are very close, we need our family, we grow near our family, we are more dependent on them I guess, which is good and bad, English tend to be more independent from a young age, and they don't need [them] as much as us they are more prepared to deal with life on their own"

But she does recognise that coming here was also a desire to live her life. This paradox and internal conflict between her emotions and her ideas is noticeable during her entire interview.

"In my country people tend to live at home with their parents for a long time. So, after living so many years with my family (there is always tensions and things) I felt I needed to live my life."

She reluctantly recognises that being here has had an impact on her and on her becoming more independent and self-assured. However, her attachment to her original roots is expressed through many experiences that she describes.

"I thought at that time, that it is very important, when you have your first baby, to be near your family... I think I kept that umbilical cord with my family and I still do."

Her sense of home changed when her children were born, and their growing up in London has meant developing ties that she is reluctant to accept, but is honest enough to acknowledge.

"I remember when I would go back to my parents' home for visiting. This was home for me. London was not home.... since they exist things have changed for me. London is their home therefore it is more my home but not completely much more than before though."

But she is still ambivalent and has not reached the point of deciding to engage in her life here.

"I hear myself and I think you are childish... but I feel, I am here for them but that I would be happier there"

Going back to her country of origin always has a strong impact on her-the physical sensations of being at "home" are very strong and her sense of self is different.

"Home, at last! The smells, so noticeable, always comes up in conversation of people who go back there, the smells, the senses, the way you are breathing, the light, my kids they always use the smell as a way to connect... The heat makes a difference, flowers smell different when it is hot the smell is stronger. Very, very sensual."

She has reached the stage now that she finds her life in London bearable but no more than that.

"I feel more at ease with London. There is no hostility now that I can find my way, speak and understand English. So, I am more comfortable, but still I prefer those smells, those lights."

However, she finally decided that she would like to invest in herself and to study a profession that might form a bridge between her country of origin and her life here; one that would allow her to work from anywhere in the world. This has been an empowering experience for her and despite the fact that her job experience is still limited she seems to be feeling better about herself. More importantly this has found a way to bridge between both homes, and it has given her hope and changed the way she feels about her life here.

“... to reach a way, to make this peace, between the two, I have two homes and I will find a way to combine them. At the same time, it is a job that allows you to do it here there and everywhere. So, it is not limiting me to one place...I feel really good.”

This experience has changed some of her sense of agency in London, although she still expresses some doubts.

“One thing is allowing me to take control and on the other hand I am hoping for things to work out....”

Despite all the above and the difficulties, she still feels that she would repeat the experiences that have shaped her way of perceiving life and of perceiving herself, although she is still not sure whether she would not have been happier staying in her country of origin.

“[Would you do it again?] It is difficult, because it has two sides. I know that my life has been enriched by that experience. I am sure that it has been more complete in a way. But has it been happier I don't know. I am not sure that by being richer made me happier I don't know, I doubt it. I guess it means that my life a part of moving countries has a lot of components.”

Her description of her dual roots is clear, but more interesting is her fear of letting go of her longing, like an ongoing internal fight that she cannot bring herself to resolve. Her attitude resembles more that of an exile than a migrant by choice and results in her disengaging from her life here on a personal, social/political and emotional level.

“The roots in my country of origin are big and the roots in London are superficial, there the roots are 75% in their density and here 25%. ... I always thought that I could have decided not

to fight, to say we are here let's try to be as happy as we can. Maybe that would have made a difference. But I always had that fight inside me. I don't want to forget, I don't want to let go, because I want to go back. I don't like, I would much preferred being another way....".

Alexia



Christoffer Relande2014

Things I miss

When I wake up to the cloudy sky
Of London,
I feel overwhelmed:
A fit of yearning.
It is not that I want to go back,
but simply miss the way it was:
The sunny mornings,
The fresh smell of Cardamom
My mother used to make with tea
Or the smell of fresh bread,
When my father is back from the bakery ...
Maybe I miss those Fridays,
When all the sisters gather around;
Voices of playing kids
Filling the air with delicious noise,

“the house can’t take us all,”
I would say,
My mother would stop me...
She likes it when we’re all there.
Maybe I miss dad’s big smile:
when his granddaughters
Greet him with a kiss.
I miss watching all the girls
Working in the kitchen,
Or Sit to the table laughing loud ...
Dad would come in, take a picture,
To remember those moments I miss!

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Alexia has been living in London for twenty-five years. She arrived, intending to stay for a couple of years, when she needed a break from her home country. She left her work and established life in her country of origin and enrolled for a university degree here. During her study years she met her future husband; also a foreign national and they have settled in London. Her children were born here and are both in their late teens. She liked London right from the start and connected with fellow foreigner students and enjoyed the cosmopolitan aspects of it. *“I loved the architecture, the vibes, and the people. Everything...”*

Alexia is very attached to her country of origin and keeps close ties with her large family there. She can spend long periods of time there during the summer in the house that she and her husband have built, and in which she has invested her whole heart and soul. She plans to spend more time there after both their retirements, depending on her children’s choices. Her connection to her country of origin is expressed through emotional and physical references, but also as the country in which she has obtained the values to she still broadly ascribes. However, she is aware of having expanded beyond these cultural and geographical boundaries.

"I still feel very (original country) inside...but I am not sure I am 100% my original nationality anymore, I feel being this, but I know that I am not acting or thinking always as my fellow nationals anymore. There a little part that took over...I think there has been some moulding, this society and living here in this country has changed me in some aspects."

Still, it is very clear that her emotional attachment to her country of origin and its culture is very strong.

"A lot of things move me to a point that English rituals or English things won't ever. Music is a good example. I have some English songs that I love but particular my culture songs, they make me cry. Just listening to them, there is sense of euphoria, and at the same a sense of being overwhelmed. A little line a little song can move me in a very strong way."

This has caused her to feel torn apart sometimes, especially when thinking of her parents who are getting older; a mix of longing and guilt.

However, Alexia is very comfortable in London, to which she is attached, and considers this city to be a home to her and to her family. She is working here and has had long relationships with people here, most of whom are foreigners, but also some English. She appreciates the openness that the city has given her, and her exposure to a variety of cultures and people. She feels at home in London but despite her sincere appreciation of living here and of the full life that she has built, her attachment to this place does not run as deeply as her attachment to her country of origin.

"I am still the same Alexia; there I am the Alexia with the experience and habit that I have acquired from here. Very easily after some time in in my country of origin, I feel my [original nationality] self coming up strongly".

She describes in a very lively manner the sense of holding both the roots she inhabits and how both are taking an active part in shaping her view of herself.

"Hum... I always, I think, my [original] side is more emotional, the temperament is different. Here my temperament is a little more stable, like the English temperament. There I become more loud... I find it emotionally more overwhelming as if things are more easily stirred out inside you. Somehow, meeting my cousins and start talking as if your soul can be stirred up from memories to happenings, everything has a different sensation, a bit more lively, is that the word? I am not sure".

It is important to her to keep the connection alive both for herself and her children. Her description of the combination of both roots, the original and present is expressed throughout her account of her experience; her original roots are deep and embody her most profound sense of self, whilst the second set is shallower.

"I feel it is very tied to my roots , when I go to my tiny village, where I haven't lived but I have spent there all my summers and I see there people that I have seen all my life and I don't speak to them often as I see them once a year but the connection that I feel to these people is so strong, even though they know nothing about my life who I am here , how I live , about the most important things here but for some reason I feel so connected to them, so much part of this community. Just looking at them is as if we told each other everything. There is a deep connection with these people that I have seen all my life as a kid.... yes, beyond words. You can't even explain it.... For them I am the Alexita as they call me as if I never left. It is very weird very, very, weird".

In parallel, she is very aware that she may be perceived by her compatriots as the daughter who emigrated as so many have done before her.

“When they see me, they see something from London Alexia.... So, maybe they see something different in me, but when I am opposite them, sitting there I don’t see it, but maybe they do, and I don’t sense it. I feel that I am that Alexia from before I left. But maybe they do, I don’t know.”

Her sense of duality is not experienced in a conflicting way, but rather one fluctuating, and her deep attachment does not impact on her decision to live here. These are two domains that she learned to hold simultaneously without the need to denigrate one above the other;

“If you would have told me you rather spend your life there I would say no! Because it is a very small society and for some of them who have never left, I see them as very special creatures that never saw the whole world outside. Some of them hardly leave the island or the village. These old people that never travelled I see them not as restricted but as special, they have this life with the same habits, the same people and I find it extraordinary in a way that they have never left. So, if you asked me I would rather live like them or even in the bigger city, I would say no.”

Her attitude to both sides is respectful; she is very measured in her words when she describes her experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual. She values both cultures and the values that they both represent in her eyes.

“[Here it is] Open, cosmopolitan, less family oriented, I remember I found it very interesting, but it did not change what I have learned [growing up]. Although I knew something were too restrictive, old generation type of advises or values, I never disregarded them as if: “where I am coming from is old fashion or restrictive... I think I conduct my life holding both values in a way. A combination completely. I was never attached to these values, but I value them, I was

never restricted but I value them in a way but seeing the new and the different also made me think what is the best that I can make from both in a way.”

Some periods were more difficult than others and having had children in a foreign country has had its challenges.

“Having children was not only a big change in the sense that becoming a mum is such a big change. But I think this is when I felt more than any other time that am living in a foreign country. In my country of origin when you have your baby, you have a big support system around you... but here I was alone.”

Her description of living with dual roots is a whole but complex picture in which each set of roots has allowed her to expand in different direction. She feels very privileged to be in such a position.

“So after about a decade of living in London, I realised I have more than one root. I had two countries, two very different countries. The light was different, the weather was different, the language was different, the music was different, the food was different, the people were different, the culture was extremely different. However, I felt I was at ease with all these differences. I was aware of them and had accepted them, even though occasionally there were moments of frustration due to these differences. I am happy to be who I am now... I am a bi-rooted person and I am OK with that!”

My own personal experience resulted from both my choice as an adult and as a child following my wandering family and was discussed in length throughout this document. It is intrinsically woven into every word as the protagonist and the narrator of this research, analysis, and description. I have therefore decided not to allocate a specific synopsis of my

experience as it felt superfluous and repetitive because it is intrinsically woven in the essence of this document.

4.2 Part 2 - Emerging super-ordinate themes

Introduction

In the process of working through the text of these interviews I discovered (and resonated with) a series of interconnected themes relating to the experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual and the way that these themes have resonated with me. These aroused my interest although they were not necessarily experiences similar to my own.

I would like to clarify that the themes which emerged are perceived as formed rather than revealed; they were formed by my interpretation and my understanding of the phenomena rather than the discovery of an 'objective' truth. These themes emerge and take shape stemming from an implicit experience that develops from a personal journey – something that emerges and resonates with people I have discussed this project with, participants in this project, myself as researcher/participant and hopefully, you the reader. However, it would be incorrect to assume that these illustrations of the experiences are randomly collected and statistically prioritised. They resonate in a certain way at a certain time as the result of our individual and human interaction with the world; the ongoing dialogue we entertain with our personal, social emotional and spiritual, exterior and interior environment.

There is a part in the experience of each participant that echoes with the others, and with myself. The expression and significance of each varies amongst us. Those differences in

emphasis are uniquely personal but this resonance creates the essence of each experience as I have perceived it.

Following the steps of Moustakas' (1990) methods, I transcribed the interviews by listening to each several times and noting down my reflections. First, I read and re-read the individual transcript in its entirety and then again and again, allowing myself to absorb freely what impacted upon me. I used the Maxqda software in order to create a digital format with which I could read the text line by line and identify 'meaning units'. Each unit was re-read in the context of the whole of the interview and of the research question. Every sentence was examined in light of how it uncovered something of the lived experience. For obvious reasons, as the reading and re-reading took place some of the information was excluded in case it was too vague or irrelevant to the research topic. However, the meanings as the analysis progressed stayed close to the language and spirit of the participants' interviews.

I further re-read all texts as one unit in relation to the separate meanings, looking for possible new connections, and in parallel examined the reliability of the meaning itself. This created hermeneutic movement from the particular to the whole and back and provided a multi-dimensional format to illustrate the complexity of the lived experience. These emergent themes are further represented by subthemes in the text, but not necessarily verbally mentioned. In a way they are the sum of the stated themes, or more a sense of what emerged from them; i.e. an underlining assumption of the position of the participants describing their experience of being *bi-rooted*, exemplified by their direct comments. The themes are part of one whole and intrinsically connected through subtle links, but are individually identified and separated from each other for clarity. When woven back together I found that they created a textured and multi-dimensional picture of the experience of

being a *bi-rooted* individual. I used the verbatim of all the participants and that of my own pilot transcript to best illustrate the themes' descriptions. By doing so, it created a stronger connection between my experience and that of the other participants. This collaborative process best captured structurally my double role as researcher and participant.

Four major themes have emerged from the analysis of the texts. Each of these represents a dimension of this experience; how it is to be a 'rooted migrant', what is the felt sense of this state, the different time dimensions associated with the experience and the visual representation of multiple roots and the meaning of this representation.

Each one contains sub themes that bundle together and create a comprehensive meaning:

1. **Being in relativity:** *Ambiguity, belonging, identity, multiple homes, multiple values, multiple languages.*
2. **Fragility and vulnerability:** *Beginnings, anxiety, fitting in, guilt, support system, feeling torn, crises back home, self-reliance.*
3. **Being in Time:** *Past, present & future, no concrete representation of the past, awareness of multiple possible futures, uncertainty & anxiety, death & burial, living in the present.*
4. **Vertical and Horizontal Roots:** *Deep roots and shallow roots, emotional and pragmatic roots, freedom, choices and responsibilities, how does the sum of the whole compare to its parts.*

1. Being in Relativity

The *bi-rooted* individual's experience of living is filtered through multiple points of reference, in multiple dimensions: cultural, personal, social, physical, emotional and spiritual. This multiplicity of relevant reference points with the country of origin and with their new

country of residence and the life that they have chosen to live, creates a sense of ambiguity impacting upon their day to day life, and so extends much further than the realm of the 'expected' characteristics of being a migrant.

Ambivalent and ambiguous positions and emotions can sometimes be difficult to contain and to manage but at other times a personal and special space is created which incorporates more than one world. From this emerges a new perspective which comprises different aspects of duality, ambiguity and ambivalence under one concept, and impacts upon their attitude towards every aspect of the *bi-rooted* migrants' lives: "Being in Relativity." This perspective relates to a sense that there is no absolute and so each aspect is relative to another within multiple points of reference. Such is the concept of relative belonging, to seeing home as a relative concept that can exist in plurality; to the experience and ability to live in multiple languages which allows a deeper understanding of each language by comparing both, and by comparing the sense of Self in each language. Dimensions such as space and time are actively experienced as flexible and ever-changing depending on the context. There was continuous reference to the life that the participants are living at present compared with that which they left behind. This emerged strongly from the texts and included their personal history and the relative cultural and personal connections that they have with life in their country of residence and those in their country of origin. This emerging theme came as a surprise to me and helped to conceptualise my own experience in a different way.

For the interviewees being in relativity means really being in one place while holding the knowledge that a different intimately known reality is happening in a different place. Holding these two simultaneously is radically different to creating a blend of both. It requires

investing and building a dynamic relationship with two different geographical, cultural and social entities resulting in the possibility of having double roots. This is described implicitly throughout the text in a continuous movement that has transformed the way the participants have perceived themselves and their environment:

"I believe I do take back home [my London self]. After all these years I am different, I am not the person I would have become, if would stay there but I am not an English person either. I am a result of the input of those two cultures and of my experience of them, In the way I experienced it." (Alexia 117)

This theme emerged during my multiple reading and immersion in the texts and strongly resonated with my own experience. It has highlighted this important aspect of being a *bi-rooted* individual, an aspect of which I was not consciously aware. Although it was never mentioned in the text explicitly, this sense of holding two or more experiential versions of their lives is woven throughout the descriptions of the participants, as it is in my life.

The theme stemmed from an intrinsic dualism experienced by the participants. This began by relating to the physical and geographical context in which the individual found herself, and evolved into a constant experience of the world in which the multiple points of reference of the emotional, psychological, social and physical world were woven into the 'here and now'.

"Yes, it is fading away, yeah... when you feel that you live with one foot here and one foot there and suddenly you notice that one of those feet is becoming more and more detached... [Yet] some aspects I am detached from other that I can't let go of. Regardless of I want to or

not, it is there. Like it is part of my fabric, so it will always be there... I know that I am attached to here, but I know these roots are not deep to be honest....” (Isadora 73)

“...My reference is going back, to how I was and how I felt, how it was like when I was there. I lived longer there than I lived in the UK, but my mature life was in the UK, it feels more like, more meaningful experiences have come from living in the UK. So, I think my point of reference is almost always going back to our lives here rather than our life in my country of origin. However, it feels strange whenever you talk to people here, because you come from a different childhood. ...I then feel quite detached because that is not the experience that I had. It was completely different... These things that people here have in common, I don't have any reference to it because it was not my experience. On the other hand, I feel more English because in my working life. I have to put original glasses on or English glasses on.” (Viola 83).

This ambiguity becomes a state of being in the world. These feelings arise through an ambiguous relationship with the new environment as well as an ambiguity towards the country of origin that might be idolised or demonised. But when they are phenomenologically explored, and the exterior layers are peeled away it results in these multiple experiences becoming apparent.

“it depends, sometimes I feel I belong into the two places, other times I feel completely comfortable here or there and then something happens like those terrorists' attacks, and I think, what am I doing here, I don't belong here, and I risking my children's life. And then I go back there, and I think, I don't recognize myself here.... sometimes I definitely belong. It is also about factual and practical things. It depends sometimes it is trickier in both sides.” (Marina 161)

“...So, my definition changes and is not the same depending of where I am. What is the same is making it very clear that I don’t fully belong somewhere but I belong to both. I have a place of my own. And this is ...I learned with time to cherish this.” – (Pilot 67)

This definition of Self evolves from a one-sided perspective which, when expanded, creates a complex multiple definition of Self and identity, hence being in the realm of constant relativity. The concept became apparent and has flowed naturally from the texts of the interviews.

“Hence the freedom... I guess, when I come back to London I feel like I am coming home, and I don’t feel it is home when I am there. Which is sad in a way. I do feel a bit like a foreigner in the way I think, in the way I speak and, in the way [that] I behave. Yeah, I do feel like a foreigner... but then I belong in other ways. I am thinking about how I reorganise myself here because I don’t feel unrooted here. But I don’t feel my roots are as deep as they been once there. Here it is more expansive; it is more connected a different movement. Not so shallow, I feel grounded and solid here.” (Isadora 77)

For the ones who have chosen to inhabit this ambiguous position it has produced a psychological climate that feels more like a mental and emotional elasticity developed throughout the years. However, this relative mental space is not an easy place to inhabit. It requires the ability to redefine oneself in uncharted territory outside the safe harbour of one’s original self-definition.

“Every time I go there, I ask myself and wonder how it is going to be this time. Because every time I go, I have different feelings about my stay there depending on... I even don’t know

what it depends on really.... So that there is nothing new to me but as I grow up and as I change, the colour of that ambivalence changes as well.” (Pilot 26)

Within the context of relativity a few subthemes emerged: *Ambivalence and ambiguity, belong and be-longing (relative belonging), identity, home (relative home), relative attachment versus absolute attachment, outsider/insider, multiple languages, values and the experience of raising children*. These highlighted the experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant. The themes are instrumental in appreciating the relevance of relativity, and when they are brought together they provide a new sense of the experience of being a bi-rooted migrant.

In the texts, the participants often refer to their lives with contradictory emotions, creating a confusing emotional climate that can be difficult to clarify. In fact, it is that emerging blurred emotional area that contributes to describing the concept of relative being. Ambiguity and ambivalence are not synonyms and yet together create a quality experienced by the participants. According to the Webster dictionary, if you are ambivalent about something, you feel two ways about it, contradictory or mixed. Ambiguous, on the other hand, means "unclear or capable of being understood in two or more different ways." (Webster dictionary page X). From the interview texts both words apply to the descriptions of the experience of being *bi-rooted*; sometimes together and sometimes separately.

“I suppose, I would like a little bit more balance [between individualism and closely knitted family/society]. So, would I I never thought about it this way, like if I like that they are more individualistic than in my country of origin. I miss [the other] part of it, that’s for sure but not enough to say I can’t stand it here and I want to go back.” (Greta 63)

“Sometimes things are wrapped in the way that seems trivial, but they run deep. You value your life here and how it allowed you to become who you are and yet when you describe [the life you lived before], and the importance it has to you to pass it to your children that seems to say something else. Some things have their own way of being, but we can’t always see them. It has very big impact, it is true I can see that it is so important that I want to pass it [my origins]. I want them to know. It is part of them...” (Isadora 65)

‘Living in a blur’ as a result of being ambiguously positioned in two worlds, at times may impact upon interpreting reality. It can create an ‘unreal’ dream-like sensation; a sense described by one of the participants as a split-second loss of reality.

“Sometimes I would wake in the middle of the night and I think what I have done, what am I doing here... why is I here? Almost with bewilderment that I have really done it. This is my life? Whose life is it? Many years ago, when I had this sort of vision, let’s call it a fantasy: I was at work, I moved abroad and lived abroad, and it felt so shocking and then I am here. But other time it feels what on earth have I done... feels that I am undecided. I think it put more pressure on you when you move because I have chosen this and if it sucks I have chosen it....” (Greta 98)

The ambivalence is linked to both countries and in different ways and has a continuous shift in perspective from the familiar to the new, to the familiar that has become foreign, and to the new that has become familiar. This creates a sense of two realities being superimposed upon each other when the sharpness of the images played become soft or sharp depending on the geographical and emotional context alike, combined with a blurred sense of past, present and future.

"I love going there and during the first two weeks, I feel I want to be there and I want to live there because it is so perfect.... but by the third week you realise..... you remember what you did not like. The family dynamic and people being opinionated, and the arguments, and then you start watching the news and you realise that everything is so shallow, and then you think hum... maybe not." (Isadora 83)

"...but then the city has changed so much, it is not my city anymore in the sense that I don't recognize the places that were to me like anchors...." (Marina 49)

"But whenever I am there in the summer, my London life disappears completely, I forget about everything, and it is still the case. So, when I leave London for the holidays it is really difficult to keep up with the two dualities. I am there. I don't know if it is relevant or if it is the case for everyone.... But I think I am becoming better at it maybe...at holding both." (Sofia 114)

It is interesting to notice that this ambiguity is present in the discourse and description of all participants; from the one who most would like to stay here to the one who is the unhappiest about her life in London and has been dreaming of going back since the moment she arrived here twenty years ago. It is as if this experience is shared regardless of the level of integration, satisfaction and contentment experienced in their lives.

"Maybe now you live in London and there is a glamour compared to your friends at home. It is so cool, but if you let go that and you go back there, and you become like the rest of them. And maybe you don't find what you thought is there, maybe it is not as great as you thought it would be because ... after so many years, you don't have many friends as many as you use to have, you are not integrated...I may not be happy....all your experiences in life

makes you richer, so going back with this baggage will be good, maybe, I am not completely sure and I cannot be ever sure of anything.... It will maybe I don't know if I can make my life there...." (Sofia 92)

This interchanging quality when referring to both countries results in strong statements that are contradicted soon after.

"It is still my country of origin, but my husband recently asked me if I would like to retire there and my first thought was NO, no way (laughing)...." (Viola 39)

This experience relates to day to day life in the present country as much as it relates to the annual or bi-annual visits in the country of origin. All participants are very attached to these and yet somehow the experience of each visit evokes ambiguous emotions and thoughts. However, this is not necessarily experienced as a difficulty.

"[I am aware of the duality], all the time but it is not something persistent that is active every day. But part of me is there family and friends and when I am there I meet my friends. So, part of me is there but I could not pack myself and go back there now, I just could not. Part of me is here, I live here my life is here, my kids are here and I really happy to be here. But this sensation of two worlds does not give me a headache. It is just what it is; between the two." (Eva 69)

"It [this aspect of narrow mindedness that you have mentioned previously when you go back home, because it is a smaller place, less cosmopolitan] absolutely questions my belonging in a practical way. The emotional belonging is still there it is a given and I am still attached to the place, but you are right I find myself thinking, I don't know how I would adapt if I was to go back." (Marina 161)

“It is like the lives together would be perfect, if only I could put them together.” (Greta 55)

Most participants have spontaneously described a sense of duality regarding their experience of belonging. This sense carries elements of internal splitting that is transcended by the sense of multiple belonging, or more to the point, a sense of relative belonging that allows them to hold a sense of multiple belonging, experienced in different ways.

“Sometimes, I feel I belong nowhere, because although we built a house there, it is not finished, it is walls and floors, so I can’t call it home. And we don’t have anything of our own here because we rent here. So, it seems that we don’t belong anywhere at the moment.... But apart from that, I feel I belong in two places and I feel good about it. I don’t have any hesitations about it: I belong to my country of origin, because of my roots and everything, and my family is still there. And I belong here because we started a new family and a new life here. (Eva 121)

This indicates a sense of belonging that is dynamic and changes in mood, shapes and colours along a continuum of belonging and non-belonging, but it results in an inclusive state rather than an exclusive one.

“But, I [belong] a little bit to both. I think that because I like many other people was able to ‘unroot’ myself, pluck myself from another life in another place. Other people have not done it not because they are unable to do it but because they have not done it. That makes them feel that they have one root. Whilst, I feel that I can [have] more and if I had a hundred lives I have a hundred roots. Therefore, I belong in London, I belong to my country of origin and I belong nowhere because I belong everywhere” (Greta 162-163)

“I feel I belong here because we have been here for many years, but I don’t feel English... I

think we belong into place [in London] now, after so many years, we have a group of friends and neighbours. You know I like the fact that I go shopping and that people know me and ask hi, how are you, I love that...you feel you made a mark where you go. So, this why we belong here, and our life belong here until otherwise. The emotional belonging is still there [in my country of origin] it is a given and I am still attached to the place (country of origin)." (Marina 161)

Belonging and the lack of it may go hand in hand with the feeling of being an outsider or insider or both simultaneously. The shifts may seem to relate naturally to the state of being a foreigner but they are not limited to that. They are more strongly experienced when going back to the country of origin and link to the expectation of feeling an insider, but being confronted by the reality that time spent in another country has imperceptibly eroded a previously held sense of Self. Likewise, in London a foreigner expects to feel an outsider and may be surprised to feel more of an insider.

"Yes, I am irritated that I am coming back, and it is not my home anymore. Because things have change for me and I have a different experience, and somethings feel alien. And I am kind of...not upset...but just feeling out of place." (Viola 47)

"... I don't have the same political emotional response. That's why, I can read in the morning, two English newspapers, one right wing, one left wing and explore the big picture of the local politics, considering different options, at home I would not be able to do that, I care too much, I feel a sort of responsibility." (Pilot 96)

"I mean if anything, I am saying I am with you, but hey I am not part of you. I have a foot somewhere else. I feel excluded when suddenly, I can't relate to something; to the way of life,

or to friends, or it takes time to recreate the intimacy that I have with them... What is the same is making it very clear that I don't fully belong somewhere but belong in different ways to different objects of belonging.... ." (Pilot 98)

This state of relative and dual belonging is deeply rooted in the experience of being *bi-rooted*. It includes an element of longing for something, although it is not always clear what exactly the longing is referring to, but it is not described as an unpleasant experience.

"I feel some longing for my country... I mean... like the soil... you know... when something happens there, I suffered for my country in the same way that you suffer for a relative who is ill or had an accident. This pain for your country. The nostalgia, when you see a football match (we are really into football in my country) when you see all the crowd celebrating together very patriotic this gives me nostalgia." (Isadora 19)

This illustrates a constant state of longing for something else that is connected to the participants' frame of reference; in physical ways (weather), emotional ways, in the values that they left behind, the ones that they kept and the new one that they have adopted. This double referencing is imbedded deep within these multiple levels.

"You long for home... longing became something that I experienced a lot. From being painful, it becomes a pleasant state actually, it is not longing for something you are missing, it is a state of longing in itself, it can be nice, because it is an emotional itch, an edge that you have all the time." (Pilot 200)

This is closely connected to the state of 'being in relativity' thus my referring to it as 'relative belonging' which exists on a continuum, rather than at a defined point. Therefore, it is a dynamic state of being, which requires a subtle emotional flexibility, as it includes elements

of alienation as well as moments of belonging to either one or both countries simultaneously.

"...if I had a hundred lives I have a hundred roots. Therefore, I belong in London, I belong to my country of origin and I belong nowhere because I belong everywhere." (Greta 162-163)

"Yes, my land, my country, in so many subtle ways it is woven... From typical dances when you are very young, music, it really gives me goose bumps. I really belong, and I don't at the same time." (Isadora 55)

Relative belonging can be experienced by the participants in positive or negative ways. However, irrespective of either, there is an awareness of the context for this definition.

"I feel I belong in two places and I feel good about it. I don't have any hesitations about it: I belong to my country of origin, because of my roots and everything, and my family is still there. And I belong in here because we started a new family and a new life here. If I did not have children, that would be a different story. Something completely different. I don't know how it would go... but it would be definitely something different. But we do have our family and our children here and we are building something new, we are starting from zero here. And that is why I belong in here." (Eva 138)

This awareness surfaces when attempting to describe the complex sense of belonging and raises questions regarding the responsibility we have as a citizen belonging to both countries. It includes relative political engagement; does this lack the strength to create, join or adhere to political movements in the hope of shaping a social and political future?

Belonging and identity may be closely related, but emerges quite distinctively from the interviews. Identity does not relate only to the nationality in which the participants are

feeling most comfortable, it is a construct that includes many components, personal, social, and spiritual. The clear sense of identity that emerges is common to all participants regardless of their experience of being *bi-rooted*. The concept of double national identity did not emerge from the text; it became more a sense of a complex and multi-layered identity. For example, none of the participants have identified themselves as English or British, regardless of the choice of citizenship. Many of them were not able to even define what it means. All participants felt more comfortable defining themselves first and foremost through their original nationality but living in London as part of their newly defined identity, which related to the values and cultural background imbedded in them from a young age with a new twist.

"I am definitely [nationality] and will always be." (Greta 43)

"[I have] the whole culture that I have in my backpack. I lived there, I grew up there, I have my family. These are all the filters that make me who I am [nationality] that is who I am, I am not English. Obviously, I have a connection to England, because, I live here, and my children are English, but certainly, I don't feel any more English." (Marina 25)

However, their initial identity was altered by the experience of relocating; by establishing a new home while still keeping close ties with their country of origin. Although they would identify with this, they described how their sense of identity has become more idiosyncratic, to include their own cultural and value system but with the contribution of local values in order to create their own synthesis of both value systems.

“Even the experience changes, I don’t experience myself as the same all the time, but I am clearly different (albeit in different ways) than when I am here, If only because I speak a different language.” (Pilot 87)

They also defined themselves as Londoners, but that identity had a temporary flavour. It was considered relevant as long as they lived here but it would also add a more cosmopolitan set of values to their identity should they choose to leave this country, and this was also echoed by those who have elected to become British nationals;

“I feel just that I am not English. I am a person here, if not English then something else. I was born there and have all the experiences that came with it. I still feel alien when we talk about our origin, but my actual life is here. I feel comfortable. I like working here and being in the UK, because this is the way I am familiar with. I can’t say that there are dual glasses, I genuinely feel that I am [my nationality], I will never say that I am British, but I have a British passport. I live in London and it is also part of my identity.” (Viola 87)

It was surprising that the sense of original national identity, however more subtly nuanced, emerged almost intact. In addition, in light of Brexit there is unease, especially amongst the European participants. This is not because they are directly worried regarding the future, more a fear of feeling an unwelcome guest who stayed here too long.

“I will never be English although I like this country a lot and it has a meaning for me, and it gave me so many opportunities, but I will always be me [my nationality]. [My values are] what I was taught by my parents and grandparents, the values that might be different from here and values that I have are different than the values people have here.” (Eva 116)

” my identity is 100% my original one, I can sense it now with all these Brexit issues. My

husband is applying for permanent citizenship. And he was saying maybe you apply too. But I don't want it, I am Spanish, I don't need to be English, and I don't need a permit for anything. I don't feel English at all, even though I have been here for 14 years. I have many English friends, but I don't identify myself as English. My cultural backgrounds are very strong to me and I am very proud of them." (Marina 23)

Home is another word/concept often used by the participants and myself during the interviews. This term is rich in different meanings; from home as a geographical place having social and cultural significance, to feeling at home with oneself and with the environment in which we live. For the *bi-rooted* individual home is more than one place. Each place, each home, can be experienced in a different way and has the quality of shifting from one meaning to another according to the personal context in which the individual is experiencing it. Therefore, home becomes a rich and complex experience carrying multiple significances.

In this context, home relates to the descriptions of the participants' experience of home and feeling 'at home' in the 'geographical' context, while the concept of being at home with oneself will be addressed later in the section on the Self although both concepts are related.

Experiencing being at home in a dual way adds to the sense of relativeness. Home is usually associated with an absolute stance or at least a sense of one solid construct (unless it is broken by a string of circumstances).

However, in the case of the *bi-rooted* migrant, it is coloured in a much more dynamic way and varies according to the emotional and geographical context in which it is experienced and carries different nuances relating to the cultural, social and personal context.

"[home is] in the sense of the house you live in definitely, and I hope our home is for our boys their home in the sense of an emotional home. For me the emotional home is still there. But our little family home is here. Home of where my childhood was and where my belonging is there, but our family home and where the four of us are and want to be is here. I have two different levels of homes." (Marina 181)

Their feeling of being at home and the definition of a home is located on a relative continuum and it therefore becomes a relative home. The sense of home is a delicately knitted construct of multiple constituents, such as language, culture and physical sensations, emotional and personal connections which are deeply imbedded in the individual. It may raise different emotions, from warm feelings to feelings of alienation in both the new home and the old home. These all contribute to the creation of a dynamic sense of home and the ability to support its continuing transformation or potential for transformation.

"I feel more detached from the place but as attached to the people who are really driving me into going there; my family and my friends and when I am with either group, family or friends, this is home to me. It does not matter if I am in a fancy restaurant or the terrace in my parents' home but that feels home, being with those people." (Marina 49)

"So, my definition changes and is not the same depending on where I am. What is the same is making it very clear that I don't fully belong somewhere... That I have a place of my own. And this is ...I learned with time to cherish this position. That place of my own. And I like it." (Pilot 78)

“...I wanted to build something; I wanted to construct that sense and wanted to belong strongly. Being here now, being not here nor there and being here and there at the same time feels completely natural to me.” (Pilot 85)

Home and the sensation of being at home with one's life in the new country of residence seems to derive from a need to invest in that life, giving it personal, social and political meaning. For example, all participants have had children here and are raising them in London, and are therefore given a further sense of purpose for transforming their place of residence into a home.

“Yes, the life that we are investing in and creating is becoming our home as well and we belong to it.” (Eva 138)

“The connection that I have here now, because I am studying, because I discovered something I love doing. I am discovering new things about myself now, so the connection [to my life here] is also changing. Because something about what I am experiencing is connected to London and yet it is a very personal experience. And it could only happen here in this way, because of the way it is.” (Pilot 64)

“But a couple of month ago, I got my papers (British nationality) ... and my husband said to me so, who are you going to vote for. And I was yeah right, I am a citizen now, I have rights and obligations. So, then it was a choice that I could exercise or not which is a choice in itself. It was like I feel like I had to say something... how is this going to affect me. It is not that my life in directly affected by politics... so yeah, I became a political being but here.” (Isadora 116)

"[The sensation of home here] it came through working experience, and interacting with other people, work, it came through buying a house here, the whole process of it that was quite alien at first. It comes through having more friends here than in in my country of origin." (Viola 91)

And yet that sensation of being at home in the new country may be shattered in the instant in which the individual is confronted with the sense of being a foreigner with a weak support system, bringing back the question of the meaning of being/feeling at home here.

"And at the same time, I just remembered a medical emergency... And then we spoke to different friends living on the same road about it. And they said why didn't you called, and I thought because this [was] the sort of thing you call family, but we have no family here, so we called no one. I don't think we felt like we could ask for help. Because they are just friends...the connection is not deep enough to knock on somebody's door in the middle of the night." (Viola 91)

The relative sense described is present with respect to both countries. It is experienced in the country of residence and experienced in a different way during the regular visits to the country of origin. This has resulted in an attempt to internalise the concept of home, and to their realizing that home also resides within the individual. Despite being moved geographically it is part of a constant shift taking place in the dual concept of home.

"[home is] here inside me, with my daughter – and my husband of course... I step inside it, totally. I also have sensation when I come back to London. I have the feeling I have come back home really, for some reason and despite what I said before. Because this where I live, but I could move that home. Because my home is here now, but it is not as engrained and

rooted as in the way that that my country of origin is. I could change London with another city that offers me whatever London offers me, but probably I will stay here till I die. But I could never have substituted my origins, how could I... I can't... "(Greta 116)

And yet, despite the complex construct of a dual home, a sense of a primal link to the country of origin resurfaces at the beginning of every visit.

"Absolutely, every time, I fly over [my city], I feel I could cry; I feel I am back home! (Marina 49) ... it is an internal warmth, suddenly I feel wow, I could explode, yes! I am back! And the first hug to my mom and my dad and my friends and it is the best thing ever! All my sense and my hair is up and I goose bumps everywhere and it is like this feels so good, I feel protected (crying). I feel I come home again." (Marina 53)

It includes a deeply rooted sense of familiarity and recognition that evokes a sense of home even while recognising a sense of detachment.

"Yeah, the feeling of landing, and even before on the plane already is almost like being there, the plane is full of my fellows national, it is kind of funny, it brings ...I feel amused, the way they speak, and the way things work.... When you are observing this because you were part of it but not anymore, but you still recognize it, but you look at it with different eyes I guess." (Isadora 79).

"It feels good to come back. It feels home." (Isadora 85)

The description of home in London is often associated with difficulties as well as with attachment to the life that has been built here, rather than the place per se.

“And now I have been here a very long time. When you take that decision then you invest yourself full on. So that you make it work. You find your little place and create your place, (Marina 179)...

“But now we are settled, and it is our little home away from home.” (Marina 187)

“When I come back [to London] and I usually stand in front of my door, I always feel happy to be back. Because in a way I do feel that this is my place. I love my house, I love what I do, the whole life that I have set up for myself.” (Viola 64)

The emotional aspect is differently experienced in both ‘homes’. The original home is associated with an emotional sense whilst the present one is more pragmatic. The emotional link translates into annoyance with criticism of the country of origin when it does not fulfil expectations; when comparisons fall short the instinctive emotional response is that of disappointment.

“I get more upset when I am [in my country of origin], if something does not go my way, or if something irritates me, and I think it is easier to adapt and change my views when I am here.” (Viola 51)

“Yes, I am irritated that I am coming back, and it is not my home anymore. Because things have change for me and I have a different experience, and somethings feel alien. And I am kind of...not upset...but just feeling out of place.” (Viola 47)

Similarly, the attachment to the country of origin was not initially questioned by the participants, as they had all chosen to relocate in light of their relationship with their partner. However, after spending years in a different country and developing a sense of attachment to the life that they are presently living, the quality of their original attachment

has been transformed. This is not to say that the attachment has less emotional connection, but this connection is not absolute anymore. It has been informed through developing and internalising a double perspective and the realization of potential possibility.

"[I feel] A big link [to my country of origin]. I still have my family there and all my friends are there. I have economic interest as well. The life there is not waiting for me it has been more than nine years, but if I went back for a couple of months it would probably be there, so I would say the connections are pretty strong. I was thirty when I moved here so, I had a complete life there.... With my family it hasn't [change] which is good.... We pick up where it was all the time, whereas with friends, I am not part of it. I was an integral person of that group of people..." (Greta 35)

"Some aspects that I am detached from other that I can't let go off. Regardless of I want to or not, it is there. Like it is part of my fabric, so it will always be there and it basic and very connected to nature." (Isadora 73)

Living in different languages simultaneously is part of the *bi-rooted* experience as the participants were chosen from countries in which the primary language is not English. This differs from bilingual individuals who have grown up using two or more languages organically. The participants have acquired the regular use of a new language later in life, despite having had previous knowledge of it as a foreign language in their country of origin. It feels more like an adoptive language than a natural one.

"... I am not the same in English, in English I say what I know, not what I want to say. I use a certain vocabulary because it is available to me, it is handy... I don't express myself the same way and I don't feel the same person." (Pilot 111)

However, this newly acquired language is firmly rooted in their life here and now.

“Yeah, somethings like very particular words that I have learned in English, and are related to an inner experience ... to which I still have to find the right translation in my language of origin... And having that word in my vocabulary, in my language was a way of describing something that I have been experiencing through the course of my life.” (Isadora 9)

This relation to the newly acquired language is directly related to the experience of living immersed in it, as this shapes part of the experience.

“I mean over the last years I grown up a lot and I have grown up in English, if you understand what I mean... so yeah... I guess my mother tongue does not come to me as easy as it used to. It is a good question... I don’t know...” (Isadora 7)

In light of the important role of language in expressing, presenting and internally processing ourselves, it contributes to a state of relativity and adds another layer in which the movement between different points of reference take place. There is a constant movement of going back and forth between their languages, both consciously and unconsciously. The relationship with both languages is dynamic and evolves over the years, from initially feeling self-conscious and sometimes alienated because of the language, to developing a familiarity with affection for the new language.

“At the beginning, I was translating but I always liked English, so it felt natural when I started feeling more comfortable, I started to read in English, then I started to speak in English then I started to dream in English. One day something happened when I was at school and my tutor was talking and I had this weird moment thinking to myself, why is he speaking my original language, because for some reason my brain was rewriting itself, and

because I understood everything, I thought he must be speaking in my language. It was a moment, and then I realised of course he is speaking in English he can't speak my language."

(Greta 14)

However, each language is creating a new definition of Self that can be experienced as sometime clearly different from the Self in the language of origin, although sometime the difference is subtler.

" [when I speak either language I am] two different people it is actually 3 people, or 4... (Laugh...) ... There is very relaxed English I use maybe with my husband or neighbours, then there is the English I use with clients and at university, so this is two. Then in my country of origin most of the times I speak in a local dialect, which is, which feel more mine than the national language. My national language is a language I speak well but I don't miss speaking it. I miss speaking my local dialect.... expressing myself in my mother tongue feels more visceral, it feels like I can express anything, I can express shades of thoughts, of feelings, in English I have to think carefully about it, and words sometimes don't come up, they come up in my original language. But now that happen in mother tongue too, obviously because the two are affecting each other. So, I don't speak totally well anything or at least that how it feels." (Greta 21)

And still sometimes she feels that English prevents her from expressing herself and experiencing herself authentically.

"And now I know that it will never give me the freedom of expressing myself 100%. I could not find the words (not basic) but you know sometimes you need to express deeper things and you can do that only in your own language. I can't imagine being with someone who

does not speak my language... When I express myself in my language it is definitely who I am, but in English, I need to find the exact words – it is just not 100% me.” (Eva 99)

“Sometimes I would like to react to something that was said but by the time I would find the right words the joke is gone, so, I don’t bother.” (Marina 83)

But at other times, the opposite is experienced and despite the different language there is no alteration to Marina’s sense of Self.

“No, [I am not different in English that in my own language] I don’t think so. I will express myself in a different way. In my language of origin, I will be more expressive, but I don’t think I am different person.” (Marina 27)

However, a sense of intimacy and knowledge of the deepest secrets of the language is reserved for her language of origin.

“There are some things that I like to express in English more than in my language of origin but there are certain types of colouring, or little spaces of emotional times that you can have in a day, that is not necessarily deep, when you want to describe that pleasure that you have or your morning coffee, that moment that you are not worrying and being really in the present. I will use my language to do that.” (Greta 27).

There is also a sense of liberation using a new language that is not bound by pre-existing expectations and social connotations, that English reflects the life that they are living here and now.

“I have the tendency not to go to the point. When I want to say something, and it is meaningful I go on a tangent. So, because I could not expand in English, I just go to the point,

very direct. So, because I could clearly say what I liked and what I disliked, so things work much better". (Greta 25)

"Because my life happens [more] in English than in my original language. So, speaking about it to friends in that language is more of an effort to find the words. I think that is it. I made it my own and this is how I feel. Language wise it feels that my original language is my native language and there are always words in English that I can't find or express, but it comes more natural in English because we are sited in this culture. Even though I can be more eloquent in in my original language." (Viola 136)

The original language is usually referred to as the language of deep emotions.

"Everything can be translated but when it comes to emotions, it will always be in my mother tongue. Really truly me." (Eva 103)

In contrast, some of the participants who are married to people from a different nationality are conducting their intimate life in English.

"I relate to my children in my language of origin and that is such an intimate relationship, but to my husband, I do it in English and that is also very intimate. I guess, it does not matter what language you speak, but you have a certain language with certain people and it does not matter what language it is, English or my mother tongue, it is the experience that you have with those people. Yeah... absolutely... I am thinking the way I speak to my best friend in my country of origin, nothing has changed. But if I meet someone, that is from my country of origin, like a client and it is a new relationship, I notice that the language has changed it is different from what it used to be." (Isadora 11)

In some situations it is experienced as limiting, while in others it is liberating. These aspects of living in double languages and not as a bi-lingual individual are reflecting a 'relative way of being', in which the mode of communication is constantly referring to multiple, cultural, personal and linguistic references.

Holding multiple sets of values and creating a mix that suits individual beliefs has permeated through the described experiences. Some of the values have clashed with each other, but what was most interesting was the candour with which each participant has opened herself to the new values without necessarily abandoning her original one. It appears that this balancing act between both sets does create a new point of view, from which the individual gains awareness of what these values represent and this enables her to hold and navigate her way through their differences. This experience further sharpened the personal appreciation that in the realm of relativity there is more than one truth.

"[London is] Open, cosmopolitan, less family oriented, I remember I found it very interesting, but it did not change what I have learned. Although I knew some things were too restrictive, old generation type of advises or values, I never disregarded them as if where I am coming from is old fashion or restrictive." (Alexia 53)

"I value the [original] values. I think human relationships are really real and I value that so much more than the pretence that you can get in this country. Or perhaps something missing. I have spoken, to mothers that are English and the way that deal with their children being away. I cannot connect with that at all." (Alexia 77)

As in my case, all participants in this research have children. These were born and raised in London and constitute a bridge between the roots for the participants, adding yet another

dimension to the *bi-rooted* experience and the need for yet another connection between country of residence and country of origin.

“Building a life here started with my family. At the beginning it was my relationship with my husband, then building a family. So, somehow, I have connected my everyday family life style to this country. My boys grew up here; they went to school here, so I accepted this. Building a life in this country was starting a family to whom I am very attached.” (Alexia 87)

There is a delicate balance between encouraging the children to feel at home in their education within the local culture, whilst still retaining familiarity with both their parents’ original culture. This raises questions and challenges that impact upon the experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual. It emerged that for all the participants it is very important to instil values and traditions stemming from their original cultures, but as the children are growing they all become more and more aware that the combination of the two will be constructed and experienced differently by their children. This has raised a lot of reflection regarding the impact of this experience on present and future.

“I want them to know what that means when they say my mother is [nationality] it is significant. What my country means. It is not just a random country in another continent. That is what I want, I guess. I don’t want them to live there if they don’t want to.” (Isadora 67)

“It was always really important to me [to teach them my language of origin] ... Maybe to have their GCSEs and to be able to communicate with the grand-parents.” (Viola 115)

“At the end of the day, it is important for him to know his background and that it is important for him to know how to write and read the language, because one day if he decided he wants to live there he can.” (Eva 31)

The concept of living in relativity is not always easy to put into words and was never explicitly expressed. It is the felt sense of movement, of nothing being ever absolute and constant change and fluidity. And yet, even though it may sound strangely equivocal, this movement has contributed a genuine sense to the bi-rooted migrant’s experience.

2. Fragility – an intrinsic sense of vulnerability

Living as a *bi-rooted* migrant highlights in both positive and negative ways the fragility of the tapestry of life that we are weaving, the choices that we make and the lives we live. There is a precarious sense of inner fragility and vulnerability that is interwoven in the participants’ stories, some of which is explicit and some of which is implicit. This is a dynamic sense that is not carried in the same way throughout the experience, but that is present none the less.

Living in the space held between two homes and constantly moving from one to the other - while settling sometimes in the ‘non-home’ space - requires a balancing act that colours the perception of life. This sense of precariousness is always present, to differing degrees; a sense of an underlying thread of instability and uncertainty that translates into feeling exposed and living with a burdening sense of personal vulnerability and weakness. This precariousness might be our fate in being human, but it is felt by the *bi-rooted* individual in a vivid and experiential way.

It relates to a sense of inner fragility which is at time challenging and difficult to bear. But this sense of vulnerability can lead to a climate of self-searching and tolerance toward Self and others which sometime results in a sense of empowerment and self-reliance and at others can be experienced as disempowering.

“Well, they have to live their life as I have to live mine.” (Marina 81)

This sense of fragility and vulnerability has become part of the life experience and engrained in the sense of Self, which is reflected in the discourse, the story and present choices of the *bi-rooted* migrant.

“Yes, [fragility] it is feeling that I have, it may completely ungrounded and everything might be the same, but that is the feeling that I have.” (Viola 111)

The initial move from one country to another is often described as difficult. The first period after moving to the UK leads to a loss of familiar reference points on all levels - personal, social and spiritual - which creates a sense of destabilisation, although for some there is also an exciting novelty.

“I think it was exciting, because all new, with my partner and we never been together in the same place, so it was kind of an adventure so very exciting...but I did not have a job, I did not have friends and I did not have family and did not have anything to do After a few months, I started to feel down, the lack of social contacts and me not knowing what to do...That was not such a nice period of my life.” (Marina 11)

“It was really depressing to find myself.... I find it so depressing that I have to live like that and why did I have to leave everything behind... we have bought a house and we set a nice family life. All of a sudden, I felt uprooted. I like change and I was looking forward to it, but

the first couple of months were very difficult, the situation I found myself in was really very tricky.” (Viola 9)

When discussing these difficulties, the theme of ‘fitting in’ emerged; the problems in finding new directions and fitting into the new society, work place, neighbourhood, etc. as well as the conflicting need to preserve one’s original sense of Self by not fitting in. This is experienced as an ongoing effort that results in a sense of loss of Self and authenticity, leaving one feeling exposed and vulnerable. As a result of that significant experience, it became more apparent that fragility runs deep and impacted strongly on the long-term experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant and is still significant for the individual regardless of how they feel about their life here today.

“...Disorientation is the exact description of how I was feeling at first...I could not find myself... I felt completely disconnected with this place...Disconnected from the place I was living in...disconnected from myself... ”(Pilot 86)

“So, I always felt the odd one out because I was forcing myself to do these things, and I pretend that I am somebody else.” (Viola 17)

But time passes, and during the process of creating a life in the new place of residence some changes are noticed which are no longer experienced as inauthentic. The shift happens imperceptibly, when the participants become more involved and engaged in their lives here. This is an empowering experience that counterbalances the sense of fragility but does not cancel it totally. It becomes a more balanced experience which includes both positive and negative aspects.

"I have shaped my own self from the combination of these two. I became this person...I think it is a result of those two lives, but I have chosen that result. It was driving me without it being my choice. So, I think, it is me, my chosen self." (Alexia 121)

"But would have I stayed there, I would not find that different side of me that I found here in the UK. England gave me a lot I really appreciate that. I would not be the person that I am back there." (Eva 9)

This sense of wanting to fit in and not always managing to do so is not exclusive to the country of residence. This also becomes noticeable during visits in the country of origin. So, the desire to fit in expands from a specific context to becoming directly related to the sense of Self.

"At the same time when I am there [in my country of origin] I never speaking English and I want to speak my language and try to fit at the same time. When I am there I never speaking English and want to speak [my mother tongue] and try to fit in, in that I am no different [here and there]." (Viola 96)

Following the initial period of adaptation in which destabilisation is experienced, and as the participants integrate new points of cultural and social references, they become more stable. But with their inherently precarious existence it is not surprising that issues around a support system were highlighted in the interviews and described as part of their experience.

"For me London was lacking a spiritual dimension. ...No head space above my head...I was longing for that dimension... So, when I moved here, my guardian angel stayed behind, and I moved alone. A dimension with which I was used to... It took time to change that feeling." (Pilot 120)

The lack of a built-in support network when arriving in a foreign country is not an unusual characteristic of the migrant's life. As a *bi-rooted migrant*, setting up in the country of residence is not necessarily related to being part of a diasporic community that might in itself provide an alternative support system. The participants expressed this lack of a support network as a difficult experience in times of need, particularly in relation to significant events such as childbirth in their new country of residence. The absence of close family was a significant contributor to the sense of precariousness that feeds into the sense of fragility that has been described as part of the experience of a *bi-rooted* migrant. Away from their natural habitat they felt increased isolation.

"...But the sole fact that we are in the UK and that we don't have family here makes it an isolating experience.... (Viola 95)

"But having children here was a little bit a shock and of a cultural shock. Because in my country when you have your baby, you have a big support system around you. I think you share all these overwhelming emotions, but here I was alone... And all the people that I loved could not see the baby... This is the moment where I felt most the loneliness of being outside your place." (Alexia 63)

"Yes, I missed my parents, and I missed having grand-parents for my son. Because it is only us, we have no one here... we had no family. And no one close enough to help with my son."(Eva 23)

Childbirth itself was not the only situation when close family contact was missed. There was a sense of 'unnaturalness' expressed in the loss of family which led to participants feeling more broadly torn apart. This can be associated with the dual experience of being *bi-rooted*.

It seems to be kept at bay in daily life, but surfaces strongly in moments of separation from family and friends and contributes to the described sense of fragility, raising questions regarding their locus of being.

“So when they leave, I find myself with an emptier house and it is more difficult to deal with [crying]... I feel torn apart, the most difficult part of living away from my family ...and some friends... ” (Greta 78)

“Yes...every time I would come back and cry for the first 3 days, and I cry when I leave there.” (Isadora 85)

“The first few days after I come back from holidays, we feel good that we are back home. But when we are there we feel that we would like to stay there. that is the time when I feel torn apart, I want to stay here but I want to go back.” (Eva 117)

This sense of feeling ‘torn apart’ is expressed through different situations, mainly in times of crisis here, or concerning elderly parents in the original country, some of whom are in need of medical and emotional support. The latter was described as a difficult experience by all participants, emphasising the unnatural aspect of familial relationships in the context of being a *bi-rooted* individual, where physical distance amplifies anxiety, combined with a sense of guilt for not supporting parents.

“Now I feel more guilty because my mum needs a lot more care and my sister have to pick up the slack, so I go every time that I can.” (Greta 84).

“...And I live very far and this is no giving peace of mind.” (Marina 47)

This continuous unease increases with time, as the need to care for aging parents becomes more acute. In these situations, none of the digital technologies that are so accessible and normally useful can replace the physical presence around the person in need. This creates a sense of guilt and helplessness which emphasizes the presence of a rift between the lives in both places. The fact that the participants seemingly have the choice of going back home more often, or for longer periods of time, seems to have a double-edged effect of sometimes relieving the pressure but sometimes increasing the guilt.

However, despite these potential setbacks, the sense of fragility that is clearly expressed has resulted in a surprising consequence. It has created a chain of reactions leading to a stronger sense of self-reliance; a sense of rising to the occasion and tapping into internal resources that were not previously obvious to each individual.

"You learn to overcome things and it makes you stronger I guess. Living in a new place..."
(Sofia 43)

"I guess I am more independent." (Marina 159)

"And also, because we never relied on any one to help us, we don't owe an explanation to anyone." (Marina 163)

"I became more open, more self-assured by having to overcome the differences, when I was in [in my country of origin] I was a shy person and I was insecure and coming here changed that." (Sofia 37)

3. Being in Time

The experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant impacts directly on the ability to picture a clear image of the future. It entails living with a past that is not geographically connected to the present, and where uncertainty creates the potential for (or the projections of) a number of possible futures.

Although the unpredictability of the future is shared by all humans, and *bi-rooted* migrants have the same basic life choices to exercise as anyone, this lack of clarity arises from the many variants in the lives of the *bi-rooted* individual and is a constant reminder of how precarious and temporary their life can be. This contrast with the perception of '*mono-rooted*' individuals who despite unpredictability, are attempting to direct their lives along a certain path and by doing so tend to attempt predictions for their future.

The acceptance of this state of future unpredictability which emerges from the interviews is an acceptance of a concrete reality; of living practically with this at an existential level, rather than a theoretical one. Therefore, this colours the present in a certain way and is an intrinsic part of the experience.

"I feel now that I completely inhabit my life." (Pilot 107)

This state is often described with angst, but also with acceptance, on a variety of levels of awareness and reactions. Some have developed an anchor in the present, leading them to embrace their life, while others, who are still experiencing themselves adrift in the present have an increasing feeling of rootlessness and lack of direction. For either, this is a strong reminder of the ephemeral aspect of the life that they are living and the equally strong impact upon their perceptions of life in general and their own lives in particular.

In this research most participants were very aware of their inability to make future projections of where they will elect to live and in consequence the kind of life they would like to live. They expressed wishes regarding the future but were all very much aware of their inability to envision these as a new reality and of the implications for this lack of clarity;

“But then yeah it comes with a price tag attached, and it comes with a lot of fears as well and anxieties about the future and a lot of uncertainties which I don’t think about because I think it would drive me crazy.” (Isadora 91)

Living between two or more geographical spaces seems to impact upon the ability to have a clear vision of the future. This life choice has created variable factors which have made this task impossible. Questions such as how they might feel in the future, their spouses, and where their children will elect to live remained open and this prevented them from entertaining thought in that way. It seems as if the links between time and geographical space that are taken for granted by *mono-rooted* individuals do not allow a specific projection into the future, but rather the projection of possible potential futures.

“When you live in one place you have set scenarios, you know exactly what you will do in a given situation... you know which flower you are going to have at your funeral. So, this leaves a lot of uncertainties.” (Isadora 91)

“Once I could imagine my future being there. Whilst here, I don’t know if I will stay here in the future, maybe here and there what kind of future?” (Pilot 154)

“And I noticed that I wanted to go back and live there but now I am not so sure anymore... and then where here and where there? That is another question... and then your kids ... what

about them... Where are they going to live? I don't want to live far from them. I want to follow them." (Isadora 21)

Accepting this future of precarious uncertainty becomes a concrete reality, rather than a theoretical one. However, this confusion does give room to very bold possibilities.

"Why would I [go back to my country of origin in old age], I would go to somewhere like Spain, or somewhere else much nicer. But we never know what might happen. And our parents ... I could go back for a couple of months or years if needed to take care of them. But we have there a house in the mountains, with peace and quiet and that appeases me. And I think ah... maybe like that yes." (Viola 145)

Or as a canvas that does not fit in with or evolve out of their present life.

"It depends unless things change and how much it changes. It has partially changed but not enough. But I don't think so...." (Greta 159)

This inability to project a future comes with an anxious sense of uncertainty intrinsic to the situation, while at the same time some previous projections are difficult to let go.

"At some point I think, alright we won't do it now [go back], but I am not going to grow old in this country!" (Sofia 62)

Inevitably, these nebulous images of what the future holds impacts on their relations with the present. This is not to say that the experience of being *bi-rooted* ignores the future and therefore holds onto the present, but it does create a different shade of meaning for the present than for a person with firmer expectations and safer options.

Children play a big role in shaping the lack of clarity regarding the future. As mothers, all participants were aware of the impact that their children's future choice of residence would have on their own position. This is even more poignant in light of their acknowledgement that they all chose their country of residence away from their family of origin.

"And then where here and where there? [Where is the future] that is another question... and then your kids ... what about them... where are they going to live? I don't want to live far from them. I want to follow them... children." (Isadora 29)

"Somehow, I hope they will be attached, because of the house, the holidays, and I do think they have strong bonds with some people there. I don't want to think about that. I want to think that there is a part of them that will be attached to my country of origin always. It would sadden me if I thought they would not have any connections. But at the same time, I accept that their connection is not as near as deep as mine who grew up there." (Alexia 93)

Their uncertainty is sometimes extended beyond their lives to after death and their place of burial. It was interesting to notice that although anxiety surrounding death is not exclusive to the *bi-rooted* migrant, here it has a specific input in the sense that the *bi-rooted* element lives beyond the death of the subject, and questions such as the meaning of being buried somewhere specific or having one's ashes scattered in multiple places arise.

"I was talking about that with my husband the other day. I want to be cremated, so he asked where do you want your ashes to be scattered. I think it is a good question... I obviously want some in in my country of origin... but I guess I want to here as well. So yes, that is me, and my ashes will be here and there, I guess this is me..." (Isadora 29)

4. Roots as a metaphor – vertical roots and horizontal roots

Throughout the text analysis all participants gave their subjective interpretation of their own roots, how and where they were ‘planted’ and the impact this has had on their lives.

The visual descriptions vary from the use of the metaphor of roots itself to the different trees representing an individual’s rooting process. The original roots are described as organically woven into the participant’s sense of Self regardless of their own level of integration in their present life. The new roots, however, were experienced as being created through the result of active work and investment. They do not define the individual, being dynamically ever-changing and evolving in different directions. These shallow roots were interpreted by some as a sense of freedom and by others as a sense of detachment and even alienation. The combination of both roots is essential to their description and the existence of this alternate root system is acknowledged throughout.

“The connections are completely different ...But here I discovered new things about myself here.... There I am grounded but limited ...Here I am not really attached but freer...” (Pilot 154)

“...It is so different... maybe because of the quality of the roots one is so emotional, it feels like a connection to family and the other more pragmatic ... you learn to find them useful not on a daily basis but when I realise that I missed being the way that I am here after an absence. I can’t even say what, but I missed something here, I can’t put the finger on it. I can’t define what is it that I miss...I live my life, in the way I build it here, and I am attached to it in my own way. But when I go back, I feel like I am plugging myself to my source of energy.”(Pilot 156)

Different sorts of roots are described, each with their own characteristics. The picture that is created reveals two sets of roots that are different in form and substance but when put together create a new whole that is bigger than the sum of its parts.

One set of roots is vertical, deeply imbedded in the emotional realm of the subject. These are roots that develop organically from growing up in a specific place, where some of the processes of being rooted are conscious and others totally unconscious. These roots were described as grounding, but also absolute, and therefore somewhat restricting. They give strength, but within this very depth and stability resides their weakness.

The second set is shallower, as it has been acquired during adult life following relocation and establishing a new life in a new country as an adult. It has multiple points of entry and multiple connections which expand in different directions. These are characterised by the participants as more flexible and fluid, and this is where strength and also weakness resides. It allows freedom but supplies little grounding.

The meaning of these roots is open to individual interpretation by the participants, from their early conceptualization to those which later become imbedded. The double roots, deep and shallow, emerge very clearly as encapsulating their experience and sometimes complementing each other.

“The truth is that when you are immersed [as mono rooted], you see other things; things that I cannot see from here. But I judge that as being narrow... maybe it is completely false... Maybe it is emotionally so fulfilling [to belong absolutely] that you feel great. But I see it as limited. This is how I interpret it. I don’t know if it is true, again, it is my experience of it.

So, my definition is quite revealing of how I feel, I experience being there but at the same time I have this other reference that I refer to.” (Pilot 32)

The differentiation between both sets of roots is very clearly expressed and become part of the lived experience and the sense of Self for the *bi-rooted* migrant.

“I am thinking about how I reorganise myself here because I don’t feel unrooted here. But I don’t feel my roots are as deep as they been once there. Here it is more expansive, it is more connected, a different movement. Not so shallow, I feel grounded and solid here. I don’t feel my attachment is shallow this is more like an Ivy; it is in movement all time. It is more like Oak there, Ivy here.” (Isadora 77)

“Whereas in here, we started something new, it is a fresh small tree, you know, and there a massive, massive tree. ‘Massive roots and small ones’. We don’t have our all family here; we are just developing our own family here. So, our roots in here are very shallow. There are two homes, but again in there and here I have two homes, but they are different. I don’t feel, I can’t say that it is similar at all. Because there, there is a history behind, many generations behind us, you know, here, we started this, it is a fresh start. We are the first ones here, we started the history, there is no one before us... We started something in here and we don’t know how it is going to be. How it will develop. Whether we will stay here or not or move that tree back there. So, at this point, I really don’t see similarities a part of calling both places home.” (Eva 111)

The description of the deep roots carries an emotional significance that is palpable from the description.

"I see there people that I have seen all my life and I don't speak to them often as I see them once a year but the connection that I feel to these people is so strong, even though they know nothing about my life who I am here, how I live, about the most important things here but for some. You can't even explain it. You just sit there and some of them use to be the grand parents or the parents of my friends, and just looking at them and sitting with them in the square of the village and we sit around, and we say a few words is as if I never left. For them I am the Alexita as they call me that have never left. It is very weird very, very, weird." (Alexia 41)

The deep roots are experienced as organically woven into their sense of Self, and the description when reconnecting with it is accompanied by a visceral description.

"... I miss the soil... I miss the smells, I miss the animals, not just about people that come and go, and it is about what is there, what makes it what it is ... my connection to my country of origin is far beyond the day to day life, something more essential from the words essence...yes, it is! Primal, almost visceral ..." (Isadora 55)

"Home, at last! The smells, so noticeable, always comes up in conversation of people who go back there, the smells, the sense, the way you breath, the light.... The heat makes a difference, flower smell different when it hot the smell is stronger. Very, very sensual." (Sofia 78)

"I look outside, and you can hardly open your eyes unless you have sunglasses on. I love this moment, this light, it feels like it is washing my soul, and everything with it. So, I feel happy maybe it does not sound as strong as I would like to express it, it feels much stronger than that." (Alexia 73)

The shallow roots that are experienced as actively constructed carry a sense of freedom, because they are tailor made to fit the individual and are part of their new life. They have no historical significance, but the combined experience of both roots enhances this sense of freedom, providing possibilities for new choices and ways of being.

"Yes, absolutely freer. I think that when I left, I became aware to the full potentiality of freedom." (Isadora 25)

"I wanted to say that it quite beneficial, (laughs) to belong to two place, to have family here, and family there, it is very beneficial for us, but I think it is very beneficial for the children because they learn that you don't have to stay in one place for all your life, that there are people all over the world, you have many opportunities, that you can travel, that nothing restricts you, you know...more fluid not stick in one way. You can choose to be whoever you like. You can have friends here and here, you are part of the family even though you live somewhere else. It is like you are on your own because your family is far away." (Eva 140)

"In that sense yes, freedom, and also because we never relied on any one to help us, we don't owe explanation to anyone. It is only the 4 of us. In that sense it is freedom. And also, I decided to come here, it was my own choice. And that's a lot of freedom as much as it broke my parent's heart." (Marina 163)

"More fluid not stuck in one way. You can choose to be whoever you like." (Eva 140)

As a result of feeling free to choose, and of the potential to shape one's life according to individual views, the experience is described as allowing a sense of self-actualisation, a process that may have been hindered by more restrictions imposed in the country of origin.

However, maintaining the existence of deeper roots is described as a strengthening factor in achieving self-actualisation.

"It would be much more judgmental in my country of origin and because I was taken away from that environment, I only have my husband as a bouncing board, and he was always very supportive in whatever I was doing. ... Whilst there it would be much more guided by friends and family." (Viola 77)

"I am still striving for authenticity. Existentially it is the most difficult thing to achieve. I am really trying to be myself; I strive for that but here at least I can try." (Greta 51)

"It is almost like I am trying to hold who I am, I am trying to become who I am, and I am doing it here rather than there, I think it would not be possible there... maybe actualisation sort of... which is very important for the individual." (Greta 88)

"I like it, yes, I think because I can pick and choose. I can like something and not like the other. Chose things that suit me and do it that way. I don't consciously choose British or other it is just that somethings are right for me other not, so I pick and choose from the two cultures and build something that is my world." (Viola 123)

The term 'Self' is used by the participants and refers to how they perceive themselves in general but also a sense of being in some ways closer to a more genuine version of themselves. This subjective construct is the sum of the individual's beliefs and experiences including their personal attributes and who and what the Self is. Resulting from the lived experience of being *bi-rooted* there is a transformation in the sense of Self. This sense is often described as being more authentic as a result of their self-development. However it

resulted in the opposite when they did not manage to move on from the initial loss that they experienced during the early period of migrating.

"I feel more myself here, because I can be free in what I do, what I believe in. When I go back, it is more like wearing a mask, because there is always that expectation that you have to be an achiever: "she left but look what she did, she has her company now and she is doing well." (Viola 67)

"It is something I was lacking, and I am still lacking ...But I realise that the sense of self of a person has to be cultivated and I have not cultivated that side in me. I decided that I could live without..." (Sophia 88)

It includes a raised level of awareness of ascertain fluidity in the sense of Self that has resulted from this new experience and occurs through the transition from one cultural, social and personal context to another. This fluidity becomes permanent with the 'interiorisation' of the new culture and as the skill of holding both simultaneously evolves.

"I suppose London Greta is a bit more free, I can try and explore ways to be. My voice changes from one language to the other." (Greta 121)

However, like all transformative experience and the changes they engender, the experiences are also perceived as difficult.

"When you move somewhere you try to be yourself as much as possible. That person that you bring from wherever you come but somehow you have to adapt always a little bit. I guess in some countries it is easier to adapt than others. I feel that here it was difficult to adapt because of the people the weather and because I knew it going to be for a long time." (Marina 187)

With hindsight, the experience has allowed a deeper understanding of Self, and the ability to hold original more stable features of the Self in conjunction with more fluid aspects.

The fluid environment in the country of residence, in which new points of reference are created while reconfiguring points of reference stemming from the original country, has created a need to look for an alternative sense of rootedness. This creates a movement between fluidity and grounding that is described throughout the experience. This sense of rootedness from within is perceived as an achievement giving a newly acquired strength which solidifies self-reliance.

"I belong with me!" (Greta 145)

"So, my roots here are more around family, my husband, our family, my job, my career, work relationships, this sort of roots." (Alexia 165)

Migrating by choice, as have the participants, means you are confronted with the consequences of your choices on a daily basis. Theoretically, despite the ties to their life here, each participant could choose to move back to their country of origin at any given time. Since they are all married and have children, such a decision potentially exists but requires reflection and some sacrifices. And that is why they face responsibility for their choices. They know that it is up to them and no one else can be blamed for these. They followed a dream (love and relationship) but have to face the ownership of that choice alone.

"And also, I decided to come here, it was my own choice. And that's a lot of freedom as much as it broke my parents' heart." (Marina 163)no, it is a different level, because I don't have to be here." (Marina 173)

"As I said it was very emotional for me to move here. And now I have been here a very long time. When you take that decision then you invest yourself full on. So that you make it work. You find your little place and create your place." (Marina 179)

The choice is forever present, even if exercising it might be difficult and implies moving all the family. So, the existence of that choice informs the experience of their being in London in the present.

"Yes exactly, maybe because I know that it is temporary, I have no issue with it. Whenever I feel I want to go to back I can, it would be different if I could not. Like that is it...if I can't [go back]. Then probably I would not feel the same. I would be homesick, like literally physically sick. " (Eva 71)

The responsibility for ones' choice is fully experienced with the freedom and burden it entails.

"I think it put more pressure on you when you move because I have chosen this and if it sucks I have chosen it..." (Greta 98)

"The privilege and the difficulty are because you need to think, and you need to take decision, and you grow because you do that, because you go through these periods of reflections. The flip side is connected to the benefit that makes it difficult. Some people see one side some see the other, but it is a matter of how you decide to deal with it." (Isadora 92)

And yet, being *bi-rooted* is perceived as a privileged experience, allowing a sense of openness to the world. There is lucidity in their high level of awareness and self-reflection which includes their sacrifices and difficulties.

"A privilege definitely, because I have two perspectives on life and it would be as good to have as many as possible, I know two quite well, I can read in two languages, I have more choices, I have Italian passport, I could have an English one, that I never thought I will need but things are changing. So definitely a privilege. I like that I watch movies in their original languages both ways. I think been an Anglo-Saxon culture has opened that world to me that I did not have access to in [my country of origin]. But I am really happy with my roots." (Greta 106)

"Roots here are strong because I love what I do, I love the atmosphere, and happy in my environment. In {my country of origin} not as permanent in a way, it is more a heart connection, as in with other people, rather than this rootedness that I would be happy to move and live there. I don't think I have that, it stems from the fact that I have more family there. These are my roots, my original roots but they are not as deep..." (Viola 101)

"I think, I prefer to be bi-rooted, I still feel very strongly being my original identity but I have managed to have two roots and still living a good life in a way. On the one hand stability of a strong belonging but on the other hand the freedom and openness that something that is more fluid." (Alexia 135)

Chapter 5

5.1 Thoughts about the research process

Before continuing to the next stage of this project, I would like to restate the way it has been structured. The project has been a journey which was initiated from my personal experiences and intuitions regarding the lived experience of being a *bi-rooted or poly-rooted* individual. This state of being raised questions for me regarding one's self-perception of the role of roots within a given context and indeed outside it. It raised questions surrounding identity, belonging and the fluidity of the concept of Self as it emerges. Through the experience it questions the meaning of home and of being at-home; the impact of acquiring a new language; the ability to project oneself into the future and the exposure and vulnerability that this choice entail. In short, the experience of living in a multi referenced universe, internally as much as externally.

My initial thoughts about this subject have informed the literature review in the first chapter and are tightly connected to my own experience of being such an individual. They were intended to determine whether a project exploring the significance of being a *bi-rooted* migrant was sustainable as a doctoral project. The preliminary review of existing literature on migration uncovered a vast terrain of potential implications, with the possibilities for analysing processes from multiple points of view: psychological, emotional, spiritual, social and anthropological. However, formal research into the lived experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual in terms of an existential-phenomenological exploration was not found.

In his book *The End of belonging* Greg Madison (2010) coined the term 'existential migration'. He concentrated on the meaning of home and the meaning of being 'At home in the world' based on his research of individuals who, because they were motivated by feeling

restricted and an urge to conquer the wider world, decided to relocate themselves. This has been a precious point of reference for my research and it has helped shape my own personal views on my experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant.

In a similar situation to mine, the participants in this research opted to elect London as their place of residence due to personal circumstances rather than as the result of not feeling congruent with their country of origin. They were pursuing a relationship with a lifelong partner and were not necessarily informed by the will to travel. These different motivations explain the importance of keeping the roots in the country of origin dynamically alive, as well as establishing new ones in the country of residence.

Therefore, the phenomenological research design was chosen in order to allow a voice for the individual's own experience of this, with the ensuing personal narratives and implications of such a life choice.

The implications of this choice, combined with my own experience, meant choosing a research method that would allow all this complexity to fit into the design and yet would allow this research the validity required for a doctoral research project. The heuristic research method was chosen as best fitting this (Methodology, chapter 3).

The heuristic research method is demanding in terms of reflection, personal involvement, and raised levels of awareness regarding my own biases and assumptions. This process was helped through the support of my supervisor as much as it was supported through my personal therapy, in which I could freely, safely and in all confidence set out my feelings, thoughts, the meaning of my personal experience and the meaning of this research for me.

The research attempted to maintain its original spirit by demonstrating a reflexive intersubjective approach to phenomenology. This has been achieved by moving between open ended, conversational interviews, and maintaining an open dialogue between personal reflection and a researcher's perspective.

The analysis of the participants' interviews attempted to maintain close connections with the individual and original meanings implied in each transcript. This analysis exposed various biographical routes, but none the less suggested a number of common themes and concerns across the group. These emergent themes were not examined as a collective. Rather they were explored as one of many possible descriptions of the complex process in order to reach a comprehensive representation of the phenomenon.

The themes were presented within the findings chapter as one possible representation of these rich lives, which were described in individual detail in order to allow the reader to form their own sense and impressions of these themes.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of this research in the same way as that presented in the previous chapter, comparing and contrasting them with philosophical concepts and ideas, as well as ideas stemming from various disciplines, highlighting different points of view pertaining to the research's conceptual framework. I will also attempt to interweave existential concepts that became integral to this research and that apply to the state of being a *bi-rooted* migrant. Most of the literature concerning migration diverges from my point of view in conceptualisation or assumptions and their conclusions. This approach will allow me to contrast my view with that of previous researchers.

I would like to point out in particular, that I will allow myself to shift between the different disciplines in order to reach a greater precision in the interpretations and the meaning these findings carry for me. In addition, they will be critically examined through the existential paradigm as illustrated by various existential thinkers discussed in the literature review chapter, as this paradigm is the backdrop for this research and existential philosophy has largely inspired and contributed to my frame of reference.

I will attempt to highlight existing referenced material connecting various themes. Thus, this part will concentrate on incorporating pre-existing concepts while remaining closely informed by the emergent themes described in chapter 4. It will contrast each theme with the relevant literature, allowing a dialogue between current discourses about these themes. Some concepts require a short definition and historical review of their development and will be allocated that space before applying them to the discussed material. These interpretations of the existing material acknowledge the importance of the literature, but expand the exploration of more general aspects. More specifically they will concentrate on conceptual and philosophical components, though my essential intention is to remain inspired by the lived experiences of the participants.

I would also like to point out that in the following structured discussion there were occasions when I could not entirely separate one theme from another as some overlap and cannot be lifted out of a lived holistic experience. For example, belonging, identity and the sense of home and 'being at home' inhabit the same emotional and mental space. Practicalities are closely linked to philosophical concepts, and these two seemingly separate conceptualisations are intimately intertwined and cannot be contained conveniently under one umbrella.

5.2 The overall experience of the phenomenon

From my personal experience and from the literature review I had expected that the experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant was unique and might fundamentally change the individual's perception of Self and of the world. I invited participants from various countries according to criteria such as age bracket, gender and number of years in London as detailed in the research methods chapter. I did not inquire about their experiences beforehand, in an attempt to keep an open mind regarding the different experiences. However, I did not anticipate that perceptual changes surrounding my own experience would be a result of this research.

The term *bi-rooted* does not exist in the literature in relation to migrants. It is rather my conceptualisation of this life choice implying a personal experiential perspective. In modern studies of migrants holding close ties to both country of origin and country of residence, they are defined as 'transnational migrants' (Levitt 2004) and are researched through social studies and an anthropological perspective, rather than a phenomenological and experiential one. The term 'transnational migrant' in itself implies an overarching title containing multiple nationalities or transcending nationalities, whilst the term *bi-rooted* migrants relates to the roots grown from the individual to the ground and relate to the personal and experiential aspect of this project. The first suggests a general overview of this phenomenon conceptualised within social studies and the latter a subjective experience of being in the world, viewed through a phenomenological prism. This phenomenon is not new. Since the 20th century, immigrants moved to new countries and remained active in the political and economic affairs of their homelands (Levitt 2004). Most migrants are at some

stage of their lives more focused on their countries of origin while at others they are more involved in their countries of residence (Ibid).

However, some of the conclusions produced common perspectives for both social and phenomenological studies, despite their paradigmatic differences. Such is the similar definition of both perspectives of a new state of being in which attachments are not binary opposites, but on the contrary can be held simultaneously and instigate a new way of being in which anchors pivot between multiple poles. It emerged from the interviews that this experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant is fundamentally linked to primarily existential issues and the following discussion will mirror the experience as described by the participants with the existential themes that they express.

5.3 Discussion

1. Relativity – Being ‘in relativity’

“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” F. Scott Fitzgerald (The Crack Up, 2018 p.69)

Throughout the interviews the theme of ‘being in ‘relativity’, although never mentioned explicitly, was interwoven in the participants’ discourse and communicated in multiple ways. When initially explored there was an awareness of being in one place while acknowledging the existence of a different intimately known reality. But this evolved into a bigger theme encompassing the whole experience and included the concept of home, belonging and

values and thus initiated a more transformative sense of Self. Holding two realities simultaneously is radically different to creating a blend of both. It requires investing and building a dynamic relationship with two different geographical, cultural and social entities resulting in the possibility of having double roots.

Living with multiple points of reference is an essential part of the experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant. All migrants have multiple roots and can refer to both. However, not all of them are necessarily keeping close and living ties with their country of origin. Therefore not all migrants necessarily entertain an internal dialogue regarding the possibility of returning at some point whether for a limited or unlimited period of time. All participants felt that this movement between both countries created a sense of 'being in relativity'.

In the texts, the participants often describe contradictory emotions, creating a confusing emotional climate that can be difficult to clarify. In fact, it is this very blurred emotional state that contributes to describing this concept of 'being in relativity', although the term is not used as such in the literature. Relativism is used differently in various disciplines and carries different meanings. Therefore, it is essential to define and explain how it is used here.

In this discussion I will refer to relativity in a broader sense, including practical as well as philosophical aspects. As such I will argue that relativity and relativism hold the idea that views are relative to differences in perception and in consideration of the context. I will argue that it is possible to hold these differences simultaneously as expressed by the participants in the descriptions of their experience. This is a point of view which produces a unique standpoint from which we not only conclude that a universal objective truth exists only in abstraction, but also that psychological concepts such as emotional theories, sense of Self, belonging, home and identity are comprehended according to a certain interchangeable

context. This resonates with the philosophical and phenomenological concepts of existential thinkers, such as Sartre's (1966) fluidity of Self and Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodied subjectivity, linking between the subjective sense of Self and physicality (2002).

My own understanding is that the term relativity contains an implicit sense of fluidity and a continuous degree of change in relation to different reference points. In other words, the existence of multiple contexts in one's awareness will necessitate juggling simultaneous multiple perspectives; hence each perspective is experienced as relative and not as an absolute reference. More specifically it relates to the possibility of being in one context but being aware of the existence of another one as described above.

The participants frequently referred to the duality created by a double reference system. From this perspective, whether examining the concept of home, belonging, identity, sense of Self and so on, there is always an alternative narrative to 'what is' in the present and the material reality in which one is anchored. This experience, of holding multiple perspectives simultaneously and of the understanding that ensues, impacts deeply upon the viewpoints which emerge and transform and enrich a possibly one sided perspective on life. In this sense it expands the experience of existence for the individual that inhabits this state of mind.

The ambiguity inherent in the *bi-rooted* experience is aligned with De Beauvoir's (2003) essay on ambiguity. In her book *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (2003) De Beauvoir discusses the ethics that are dealing with a choice between the 'in-itself' and the 'for-itself' which stem from Sartre's (1966) distinction in *Being and Nothingness*. But De Beauvoir develops a richer perspective. She agrees with Sartre that both these aspects may be found in humans' experience of themselves and the world around them. The 'in-itself' is the realm of material

things, which have an inherent, pre-determined essence (Sartre, 1966) and is opposed to the 'for-itself' that is the category of 'beings' with consciousness, who are inherently without a pre-determined essence, continually recreating themselves through their choices and actions (Ibid).

Unlike Sartre though, and more pertinent to the argument of this research, De Beauvoir believes that an existing permanent tension between these aspects contributes to the ambiguous state of human existence. Such is the ambiguity between the individual's past as a given thing determining the nature of the present, as this present is the result of the choices made in the past and a future that is about to be freely created. As the future that stems partially from present choices is still to be known, we feel the responsibility of each choice that we make (Moore, 2008). Because the participants chose to make a separation between their lives in their country of origin and that of the country of residence, they often related to this ambiguity as anxiety provoking and needing to be reflected upon and conceptualised, in order to be processed.

Furthermore, one of the characteristics of human existence is that we hold a vast number of these polarities, including reciprocity between Self and Other, and so in the context of this research hold two sets of roots which impact upon every aspect of our life. Therefore when our ambiguities are explored, no prioritization of any one over the other need be established. De Beauvoir explores that polarity in the relationship between ontological freedom and moral freedom, arguing that although humans are ontologically free, they are not necessarily morally free. In other words, moral freedom is a response to one's condition of ontological freedom (Arp, 2001).

Drawing on this concept, I would like to apply De Beauvoir's suggested ontological polarity of human existence and various aspects of human ambiguity to living 'in relativity'; the experience of living in relative terms due to multiple cultural and personal points of reference. If polarity and duality are ontological to human existence and are both crucial in the search for freedom, this is an additional dimension pertaining to the *bi-rooted* experience and provides the opportunity to use this relative perception as a spring board for personal development. The *bi-rooted* migrant is confronted with the experience of living in one reality, while being still actively engaged in another. This ambiguity comprises various aspects and levels of complexity which include mental, moral and emotional components. Holding both these realities implies a diversity of values and life choices that results in certain life styles which may clash with each other. This was experienced and described by the participants as a dynamic and demanding process which was difficult to handle at times and yet on the other hand they appreciated and considered it a privilege. Similarly, a sense of relative attachment is implied that raises questions of belonging, home and identity, all of which impact on the sense of Self and on our ability to relate to others on an interpersonal level as well as a wider social and political level. For the participants, there was a fluctuating continuum rather than a fixed point, to the extent that this often moved and was reconsidered during the same interview.

Having been exposed to 'being in relativity' may impact upon the life of the individual, when the concept of absolutism has been destroyed and with it the reassurance but also the limitation it represents. It uncovers the existence of this multiplicity of references and results in raising a new awareness of multiple versions of oneself. This is the very essence of the transformative aspect of this experience, since what has been seen and interiorised cannot

be unseen. This shift in the perception of Self was even described by one participant as a shift in perception of the physical Self, when she described perceiving herself as physically different, slimmer and more beautiful, in her country of origin.

According to the participants' experiences as well as my own, experiencing living 'in relativity' may aid our understanding of the duality of the Self and teach us to make sense of it, but this experience does not only relate to the individual on a theoretical and philosophical level. It impacts strongly on the feeling of uncertainty and the anxiety that ensues. In this sense it exposes us to existential anxiety and diminishes the margins for denial, (without dismissing or ignoring the developed 'gift' and the propensity that we human beings have for denial).

This also aligns with Kierkegaard's (1980) argument that existential anxiety appears with the development of self-consciousness. The connection between anxiety and uncertainty is significant because anxiety is the result of the fundamental understanding of uncertainty that is not possible without self-awareness (Popovic, 2002). Thus, anxiety is linked to a higher level of self-awareness and self-consciousness.

For Kierkegaard, ignoring possibilities and freedom leads to a sterile life, resulting in stagnation and robbing the individual of the hope for a better future. Therefore, as anxiety is an integral part of the experience of freedom and infinite possibilities, life is worth living by being anxious in the right way. Thus, inhabiting the state of relateness accords with choosing to live with anxiety.

Similarly, I would like to argue that the existential crisis that accompanies the relocation process into a foreign country, the anxiety that it engenders and the self-development that it

requires in order to contain this situation, entails the awakening of self-consciousness. In symbolic terms it represents the myth of the tree of knowledge and in a deeper sense of tasting the forbidden fruit, and then becoming aware of the possibility of freedom; i.e. the freedom that is the result of understanding the innumerable possibilities of ways of being, following exposure and immersion in the new country of residence. The experience of the immensity of the unknown in this context, concretises the understanding that the pursuit of each possibility in life could open a door into a different potential; a different unknown. All of which contributes to the higher sense of anxiety. This concretisation of the concept of freedom amidst the large number of possibilities engenders a great anxiety that Kierkegaard termed "*the dizziness of freedom*" (Kierkegaard, 1980). This dizziness combines the fear of falling with the realisation that we are free to jump, and by doing so we grant ourselves control over the way we choose to live our lives. This is a habitable space loaded with tension as one is simultaneously attracted by this freedom but deterred by the strains, questions and the responsibility it imposes on us. One of the participants described this stage of her experience as a meltdown of everything she held certain and stable about herself. However, from that void she managed to emerge with a new sense of self; freer and truer to herself.

This is part of the willingness of the *bi-rooted* migrant to inhabit two or more worlds while maintaining an awareness of the existence of each. Thus, this allows the individual to expand his/her experience from living in one world to the knowledge that many other worlds exist in any given moment in time and in various geographical and cultural contexts. One participant described this as surreal at times, when she wakes up in the middle of the night and can hardly believe that this is her life. However, this can prove to be a difficult and

demanding experience, and so sometimes we may draw back from freedom and deny its existence, and we adopt 'finiteness' instead. We live as if the world and our situation in it were bound and immune to change. This was best expressed by one of the participants wishing for an external event that would oblige her and her family to go back to their country of origin, so relieving her of the responsibility for this choice. This may serve the purpose of alleviating anxiety, but it comes at the cost of our growth. The ability to co-exist with anxiety and take action in its presence is at the heart of the existential paradigm and without it one cannot explore the unknown, and determine our own limitations. Without the ability to live with anxiety, one would not be able to remain open to face the future and choose between what is suggested to us or indeed use our creative powers to produce other new possibilities.

"Learning to know anxiety is an adventure which every man has to affront...He therefore who has learned rightly to be in anxiety has learned the most important thing." (Kierkegaard, 1980, p186).

'Being in relativity' is connected to the movement of change and the need for the Self to adapt to an ever-changing environment, whilst attempting to maintain an established internal balance between the familiar and the new. This is a constant reminder that the concept of identity and our sense of it is not fixed.

One could argue that this position may result in a sterile no man's land, a 'sitting on the fence', rather than choosing to fully and totally engage in day to day local life, where ever this may be. However, it is my experience that recognising and accepting the fluctuating sense of Self may generate opportunities for diving deeply into two or more life experiences. These experiences relate to different social, emotional and geographical settings, resulting

in an internal richness. This complexity percolates into various dimensions of human existence, creating multiple points of view and eventually translating into an all-embracing and flexible attitude to life. Movement and attachment are therefore not linear or sequential, but capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction over time. The median point on this gauge is not full incorporation but rather simultaneity of connection.

As has been widely discussed from an analytical perspective, in light of the seismic shift that takes place when relocating to a new place of residence, most recognised points of reference mirroring the self-image dematerialise, (Akhtar, 1999, Grinberg & Grinberg 1989). This sudden clearing of the scenery that used to be part of the Self creates a vast void. Whether or not this state of affairs produces a mourning period or a sense of liberation it will result in eroding self-assumptions, self -identity and with it create a clear and renewed sense of Self, allowing a fresh relationship and understanding between Self and context to develop out of emptiness.

However, as experienced by the cohort, the *bi-rooted* individual is confronted regularly with a simultaneous and flexible set of references which will contribute to the sense of being in constant flux. Thus both sets of interchanging references create uniquely multiple points of view, while at the same time the person retains the awareness that both exist.

This resonates with the analysis of the Self, proposed by Sedikides & Brewer (1996), and its representation through three aspects: the individual Self, the relational Self, and the collective Self. This may facilitate understanding the fluid nature of the *bi-rooted* individual's Self, and his/her propensity to acknowledge and adopt his own fluidity, hence 'being in relativity' as a way of 'being in the world'. It also resonates with Sartre's (1966) outlook on the Self and its ever-changing nature being the result of our experiences of life and their

subjective meanings. All individuals are in possession of consciousness and self-consciousness, which are eternally changeable, thus his assertion that existence precedes essence. However, living with an inherent duality and experiencing 'being in relativity' as opposed to holding one point of reference, despite exposure to various cultures through digital technology, accentuates the notion of changeability and raises it to a heightened level. The need to adapt and adopt through a process of discovery and triage in order to be more authentic is to transform a theoretical abstract concept into a concrete life experience. This attitude, if embraced and cultivated by the individual, may transform the concept of binary identity into a deeper understanding of a more complex construct that emphasises the fluidity of the Self through 'being in relativity'.

This simultaneous existence of multiple frameworks (cultural, social, emotional and psychological) in the internal *bi-rooted* individual created for most of the participants a new experience of being, while raising the individual's awareness of its fluidity and with it the notion of relativity.

Furthermore, the simultaneous exposure to different environments may encourage the individual to question these references rather than accept them as an axiom. Increased critical capacities, as well as the reduction of assumptions and expectations in both the social and personal realm, may encourage the creation of greater authenticity.

This lived experience may impact on the sense of self through language and verbalisation, as they are means of understanding and expressing ourselves and meeting the world. Language plays a vital role in our emotional lives. Smith (2015) argues that language and words play a double role; they describe how we feel but more importantly they shape how we understand our feelings. Consequently, a limited vocabulary diminishes emotional self-

expression, but more importantly, self-perception. As individuals living in relation to others and to ourselves we need the ability to explain ourselves to ourselves, as well as to others. This diminished capacity for experiencing the Self resonates very strongly with my own experience when first moving to London. I could only use the words I knew rather than expressing with precision what I wanted to say. Eventually I felt I could not define clearly what it was that I wanted to say. Thus, (for the migrant) the experience of acquiring a new language will add another dimension to the question of identity. A new language may initially be experienced as a flat, lifeless means of communication that will need to be acquired and tamed. But when finally appropriated by the individual it will become part of an organic experience of being in the new country of origin.

Barbara Cassin (2018) argued that language is the site of temporary identity and that languages are infinitely different because they do not have the same kind of organization. This has resonated strongly with my personal experience and that of other participants. This means that each language impacts on our way of thinking through its syntax and organisation as well as vocabulary, hence learning to live in a new language will suggest an alternative organisation to the original one. Equally, certain languages sometimes have a plethora of words to designate the essential things in their physical or cultural world. These are so essential that they make distinctions in places where an outsider could never even imagine that they exist (Ibid).

Consequently, it is my experience and that of the participants that using a foreign language has added another dimension to being *bi-rooted*. It has expanded the experience of living geographically with two places in mind which was created by my experience of migrating, and this has been conceptualized as a result of this research as being in the realm of

relativity. Expressing oneself in a different language will expose us to a different experience of ourselves and will raise our awareness and later on potentially develop our creativity. Thus, the role of language is central to the ever-changing sense of self and its contribution to being in flux.

Uncertainty is an ontological trait of human lives wherever they take place. However, we invest considerable effort in order to reassure ourselves and create an illusion of certainty. Transcending duality, rather than polarising it, is also related to accepting that reality is relative; that in being *bi-rooted* we experience that relativity and become aware of its uncertainty. As described above and in the next emerging theme, the awareness of that precariousness is inherent for the *bi-rooted* migrant through the experience of living outside the safety of a support system. This was especially present in the participant's description of situations of crisis or intense stress such as illness or childbirth. Realising the limitations of relying upon the safety of a support system does not mean denying its importance but can encourage letting go the need for grounding *mono-rooted* attachment.

It was implicitly expressed by the participants that by accepting being 'in relativity', we transcend this duality and we adopt uncertainty as a way of being in the world. But because of this relativity and having the privilege of multiple lived points of view, we also acquire the freedom to change and embrace a more authentic approach to life. However, before and during this process of acceptance, the participants found themselves disconnected and alienated.

This overlaps with the concepts of relative belonging and relative home that were communicated during the interviews. These often appear as a pair, and although they have different definitions, are closely related to each other. The interviewees often referred to

having two homes which were different in character but equally significant. The definition of home and homelessness has been the subject of endless philosophical and psychological deliberations. As a result, one could argue that home is not a defined variable which is clearly labelled, measured and explained in advance (Dovey, 1985). Belonging, on the other hand, has been seen more in terms of psychological needs. But is it really needed, and in an exclusive and total manner? If so, how is this need to be met in the internal universe of the *bi-rooted* migrant? Is this need not met? Does it have to be confined within geographical boundaries? Does each person reach a different balance with which s/he finds a way to meet that need? I would like to use the opportunity given by this research to deepen my understanding and suggest that there might be many ways of belonging. This phenomenon is clearly expressed in the interview texts.

Initially, the need for belonging and the existential concept of home, of being or not being at home with oneself, seem to be contradictory. The psychological need to belong as argued by Deci and Ryan (1991) suggests that this need for relatedness encompasses a deep desire to connect with others; to care for them, to feel that this is reciprocated authentically by them and by doing so, creates the motivation to engage and become involved with the social environment more generally. Baumeister and Leary (1995) also argued that the main characteristic of the need to belong is the need for consistent connection with others; empathy and emotion and the perception of stable relationships relevant in the present. Their '*belongingness*' concept suggested that human beings have an inherent and tenacious motivation to create at least some minimum number of permanent and meaningful interpersonal relationships and that failing to create that sense of belonging may create feelings of isolation, estrangement, disaffection and loneliness. This highlights the necessity

and importance of one developing positive social connections with people that are initially perceived as strangers (Ibid).

In contrast, the concept of being 'at home' was seen by both Sartre (1966) and Heidegger (1996) as a sign of being in 'bad faith'. They argued that the authentic way of being in the world was that of homelessness i.e., outside the comfort zone which we use in order to avoid dealing with our existential conflicts.

So how can these two concepts be brought together coherently in attempting to bridge emotional need and authentic living within the context of being a *bi-rooted individual*? And how was it expressed by the participants?

In the interview texts, belonging is described as a relative notion, rather than an all or nothing concept. The notion of home and belonging is often seen as a means to escape the confrontation with existential themes such as aloneness, self-purpose, meaning and death (Yalom, 1980); of throwing ourselves into the noise of social living in order to ignore the deafening existential silence around us. However, some existential thinkers, such as Gadamer (1996) and Merleau-Ponty (2002) took a different stance. They argued that being at home relates to an inner balance which enables us to be open to explore the world when past, future and present unite in one instant, rather than being deemed 'bad faith'.

As described, the sense of 'relative belonging' was expressed in different ways and triggered different feelings from all participants during the interviews and was woven explicitly and implicitly throughout the texts. Emotional belonging has a deeper connection and triggers strong emotions of care, empathy, worry, a sense of being part of something bigger and

meaningful in which social engagement is perceived as civic duty and the responsibility of contributing to society.

This emotional connection and sense of social responsibility is also part of a complex system of attachment resembling that found in a family. However, it may promote uniformity and conformity with resulting feelings of restriction, resistance and a sense of separateness and isolation in one's own home. Being comfortable with my own life here and now, means being connected to my life here in a freer way; a sense of belonging and being at home that is not necessarily loaded with an entire historical and political context. This sense of freedom was often described in the interviews in relation to self-actualisation and self-discovery resulting in a different sense of Self. The theme of self-discovery was common to all participants but was emphasized by participants originating from more traditional backgrounds.

In addition, the sense of belonging and home as fixed concepts are often used as a vehicle for the individual to cling to; an elevated higher meaning and sense of purpose abnegating personal responsibilities and decisions. By proclaiming himself part of a national group and cementing his specific sense of belonging the individual spares himself the need to disclose who and what he is, yet this is exactly where his humanity lies (Steiner, 1967). Thus, when we live outside the realm of fixed belonging, we need to find the sense of purpose from within and therefore take responsibility for our choices.

In the realm of relativity, one does not have the luxury and the comfort of being able to condone or condemn the countries to which one is attached, and allegiances cease to be totally tribal in the same way. One is tested between the sense of loyalty to the internal world inhabited at present and that of natal or present residence obligations.

I have been struck by how brilliantly, albeit dramatically, and may I dare say quite adamantly and absolutely, Steiner has described it. This closely ties in with some of the writing about exile and estrangement that has most interested me, such as the Algerian writing of Helene Cixous (1997) and has common ground with others, such as Edward Said who shares a common tone with 'Language and Silence' in his work *Reflections on Exile* (1994).

The following passage, from *A Kind of survivor*, by Steiner, particularly stood out for me:

"Nationalism is the venom of our age. It has brought Europe to the edge of ruin. It drives the new states of Asia and Africa like crazed lemmings. By proclaiming himself a Ghanaian, a Nicaraguan, a Maltese, a man spares himself vexation. He need not ravel out what he is, where his humanity lies. He becomes one of an armed, coherent pack...To show that where trees have roots, men have legs and are each other's guests. If the potential of civilization is not to be destroyed, we shall have to develop more complex, more provisional loyalties. There are, as Socrates taught, necessary treasons to make the city freer and more open to man. Even a Great Society is a bounded, transient thing compared to the free play of the mind and the anarchic discipline of its dreams." (1967, p.132-3),

In theory, 'being in relativity' is characterised by the ability to openly and honestly revisit one's position without deeming any idea to be sacred. This acquired new perspective was often referred to by one participant and resonated with my own experience. However, it proved to be as challenging on a personal level as on a broader cultural and moral one. In reality we do hold on to our values until they are challenged. So, perhaps this concept may slightly raise an awareness of this tendency so that we will question it and be encouraged to adopt a more critical stance towards values and ideas.

This resonates with Papastephanou's (2013; 2016) perspective regarding the relational stance for the ethical cosmopolitan/foreigner. Such a perspective involves opening oneself to others and presupposes adopting the position in which the Self is relational, rather than the central point of reference. This position does make higher demands on the individual and his/her sense of Self and achieving it as a migrant is no small task.

The absence of one unique central point of reference is reflected strongly in this research and is part of the experience of being a *bi-rooted* individual. The process of laying down new roots might be demanding and necessitate a relativist attitude that reduces the distance separating the migrant from others as much as it is the locals' task to welcome the migrant in an ethical manner. It further requires keeping an ongoing connection with a space outside of the physical geographical scope. It requires perhaps distancing oneself from a basic notion of identity – not of its denial – but a rather more profound reflection on the meaning of identity and Self and their subjective construct.

In fact, acquiring an 'eccentric perspective' (Peters & Papastephanou, 2013), in which different interests and aspects are not orbiting around a single centre, offers a new perspective on the relationship for the individual with multiple roots and multiple aspects of identity. Their ethical model described above does reflect the complexity and intrinsic fragility of the individual's present attachment rather than concentrating on limiting particular allegiances, and thus creating a polycentric alternative (Ibid). The ability to create mobile and ever shifting centres might allow us to reduce the distance that we maintain towards the environment in which we circulate, rather than just altering the personal, emotional, and cultural filters through which we comprehend otherness. Adopting this open stance is particularly interesting, as the literature often disregards the benefits of an ethical

position for the host. Papastephanou (2013) argues that initially and before adopting an eccentric stance, the Self and a rigid notion of identity may shape our reactions toward the new culture, hence her definition of the Self as the intruder rather than one that appreciates the novelty of values and cultural references. Here, our constructed Self is interfering in our ability to explore the new and holds us captive in a self-created image of a world which apparently grounds us and creates so-called stability. Acquiring a fluid and flexible sense of Self and notion of complex Identity requires challenging self-work. It is precisely the nature of this self-work that in turn will contribute to the transformative aspect of this experience.

With the 'eccentric perspective' there is the propensity for both freedom and responsibility which is quite clearly reflecting a principle developed and discussed in the traditional existential literature by Sartre or Kierkegaard as described above. This paradoxical position was mirrored in the interview texts and the sense of anxiety that ensued was often mentioned. This was clearly asserted by most participants and recognised even by those who would not face up to their freedom of choice. Being prepared to examine one's assumptions is at the heart of Nietzsche *Übermensch*'s (1995), Heidegger's (1996) concept of authenticity or Sartre's (2001) quest for being less in 'bad faith'.

Belonging is not seen as an absolute concept in the interview texts despite a clear sense of national identity. Rather, it is seen as ambiguously existing in the tension between the need to be connected with oneself and the need to connect with others, and the potential to actively participate in a bigger social and political movement. But it also includes the potential for the crushing pressure of uniformity, which therefore restricts opportunities for developing personal aspirations and self-potential. For one participant this meant she will not choose to go back to her country of origin permanently but will visit often, whilst for

another it meant that she may move back in the future but will retain that sense of freedom by still cultivating her newly acquired roots, even if she does not live here anymore.

Approaching belonging as a relative concept allows a pluralistic and inclusive possibility that implies a multiplicity of belongings, suggesting multiple homes and allowing the 'possibility of provisional loyalties' (Steiner, 1967) as a relative rather than absolute notion.

This interestingly resonates with studies and researches conducted in the framework of Social studies and anthropology. These perspectives have been focusing on locating migrants within the 'transnational' social categories in which they may or may not be embedded (Levitt, 2004). This refers to institutions, organizations, and experiences that produce various groups of identity that may be attributed to, or chosen, by individuals or groups. Individuals can be embedded in a social domain but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with it. Because they live within this domain, they have the potential to act or identify with it at any particular time, though not all choose to do so.

More pertinent to this research is the social perspective which exposes the difference between ways of being and belonging in a certain social category. It has been argued that people who engage in social practices may be relating to the identity of these social categories in which the practices are taking place rather than the identities linked to their actions (Feron & Schiller Glick, 2001). In contrast, belonging may refer to practices that indicate or endorse identities which establish a conscious connection to a particular group. The migrant may invest, vote, or belong to a communal organisation that is linked to their country of origin, but they may identify themselves as belonging to a 'transnational' group and engaging in 'transnational' activities (Levitt, 2004). Belonging combines action and awareness linked to the kind of identity that is considered. In this research the theme of

belonging is perceived as a complex concept incorporating personal, social and national aspects. Belonging to the life in the present country became embedded within the way the participants saw themselves. However their allegiance to the country of origin remained strong.

Therefore, Levitt (2004) argues that it is critical to examine how the connections are integrated into a web of vertical and horizontal systems that go beyond the limitations of the traditional definition of belonging and identity. In this sense the description of the lived experience coincides with the social and theoretical perspectives. However, rather than privileging one over another, a 'transnational' perspective holds these sites equally and simultaneously in dialogue with each other and tries to hold the tension between them. It makes evident that assimilation in a new state and enduring these dual attachments are not binary opposites. Instead, it is more useful to think of the *bi-rooted* migrant's experience as a mobile construct which rotates between the new country and the country of origin, adopting a *bi-national* orientation.

In parallel, despite the different perspectives and disciplines, but similar to the conclusion of this research, Levitt (2004) argued that movement and attachment are not linear or sequential, but capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction over time. Much depends on context and on personal psychological make up and personal values. This raises the critical question of inclusive consciousness. In what sense, does immigration have to be grounded in a broad, experimental, inclusive, normative consciousness of the cultural Other? Such a consciousness would need to include elements of reflexivity that is not necessarily shared. This experience may open an internal dialogue between the mobile and fluid Self and the rooted and grounded Self. This dialogue can become fruitful and result in personal

growth or open a chasm between these conflictual selves, resulting in a sense of being 'out of place' everywhere, as experienced by the participant who could not let go of her dream of going back to her country of origin.

Again, the proposed concept of multiplicity of homes and belongings builds on Madison's (2010) theory, in which he argues that it is 'the end of belonging' when the 'existential migrants' choose to belong in the 'non-belonging', meaning being at home in the 'non being at home'. This interpretation relates to the '*mono-rooted*' individual and the restriction it entails. Madison's perspective proposes a binary positioning of the concept of belonging, either belonging or not belonging, but this could be expanded when seen from a *bi/poly rooted* perspective. The choice of non-belonging could be seen as one of the options available to the *bi-rooted* migrant.

I would like to include other aspects that add up to non-belonging, as it is experienced in this research in different ways and meanings, depending on the bilateral relationship held by the migrant with both her country of residence and her country of origin. This proposition does not see belonging and non-belonging as polarised, but rather in a commonality that allows the creation of a new concept of relative belonging. It draws from Madison's theory of 'existential migration' in so far as the not being absolutely at home may be the parameter that allows self-exploration for being at home with oneself. This interpretation relies on our need for connections - human, professional, social and therefore emotional, so that if we choose to construct a life which includes these components, and we manage to maintain this situation in multiple social and geographical places, we may create a new sense of belonging that will have different meanings. This is a dynamic state in which individuals may shift

meanings in different periods of life but constantly hold a relative attitude as a result of their lived experience.

Consequently, there is an additional dimension to the concept of belonging. Instead of accepting a unilateral perspective in the narrative quest for belonging, I would like to suggest splitting the word into two, to describe a *state* rather than an action: 'Be-longing', becomes an active state of longing *for* something, to be somewhere simultaneously, to be different versions of ourselves as argued in the exploration of the concept of nostalgia (Ortony, Clore and Collins, 1988). This has strongly been part of my personal experience. Be-longing can be interpreted as a positive state encouraging self-awareness of multiple potentials and choices rather than just the experience of a void and a state of absence. This may encourage a healthy layer of doubt and questioning, thus taking responsibility for the choices we make. So, be-longing can be seen as a flexible concept which includes being with and longing *for* simultaneously.

Ambiguity and relativity are part of complex constructs, both in the experience of being a *bi-rooted* migrant and of humanity in general, although the latter may not recognise this unless prepared to embrace this way of being in the world. However, this conceptual point of view is offered to migrant and non-migrant alike. Opening oneself to ambiguity and to 'being in relativity' gives an opportunity to embrace a more fluid, flexible, reflexive and dare I say truthful way of being. But it is still up to each of us to make that choice and to take responsibility for it.

2. Fragility, Vulnerability, Compassion

As 'being in relativity' raises an individual's awareness of uncertainty and exposure it is likely that feelings of fragility and vulnerability may arise. The precarious sense of inner fragility and vulnerability that is interwoven in the participants' stories, explicitly or implicitly highlights this.

Living in the space held between two emotional and physical 'homes' and constantly moving from one to the other, or inhabiting the 'non-home' space some of the time as testified by the participants, results amongst other things in a sense of exposure and this resonated with my own experience. The sense of precariousness is always present to differing degrees; the perpetually underlying sense of living with instability and uncertainty that translates into feeling exposed and vulnerable. This precariousness might be our fate in being human, but it is felt by the *bi-rooted* individual in a vivid and experiential way.

It creates a sense of inner fragility which is at time challenging and difficult to tolerate, and which sometimes participants described as burdening but also empowering when the challenge was successfully met. However, it also emerges from the interview texts that this sense of vulnerability can lead to a climate of self-searching and tolerance toward Self and others which sometimes can result in a sense of empowerment and self-reliance and at others can be experienced as disempowering.

Although its significance is recognized in moral theory, traditionally, there has been little systematic analysis of the concept of vulnerability (Mackenzie, Rogers & Dodds, 2013), but this is changing.

The term vulnerability is described in detail in *Daring Greatly*, Brene Brown (2015) in which she discusses its importance, proposing that it is a crucial part of human existence that is often ignored or inhibited. Emotions are part of the human make up and thus they have the potential to make us vulnerable, which entails uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. However, vulnerability can offer great rewards in relationships (Yalom, 1980). In therapy, clients who withhold their emotions are referred to as 'resistant'. This term is usually credited with a negative significance. Vulnerability has a pejorative meaning, perhaps because we associate it with a loss of power. But, this perception is shifting; Brown (2015) argued that vulnerability is not weakness, as to be vulnerable is courageous.

As expressed throughout the interviews, when a sense of vulnerability has been accepted or even embraced it has led the participants to seek a deeper understanding of themselves. They acknowledge that when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable we have the rare opportunity to experience aspects of ourselves of which we might not otherwise be aware. Individuals may be full of vitality, curiosity and caring. However, by the same token they could be described as self-centred, reckless and hostile towards other people, some of whom are important to them, all depending on their personal experience and context. And so it has been argued that humans possess the potential for growth while also possessing vulnerabilities and self-protective mechanisms (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

Accepting vulnerability as an opportunity for growth has been addressed by various psychological theories, whether in the field of clinical psychology, where the focus has been directed towards the development of pathological outcomes (Cicchetti, 2006) or in the field of positive psychology that concentrated on the factors that contribute to people's growth, such as qualities of empathy and gratefulness (Sheldon & King, 2001). Both arenas have

argued that the combination of 'healthy' tendencies and vulnerabilities can be elucidated by one underlying principle; basic psychological need for satisfaction and the existence of frustration which can contribute to the "dark" and "bright" side of human functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

When the participants rose to the challenges facing them it resulted in a sense of inner strength and a renewed trust in their own inner resources. According to their testimonies, this occurred as the result of facing difficulties and frustrations as well as overcoming difficulties. This resonates with Ryan & Deci's, (2000a) argument regarding the link between the fulfilment of the psychological need for independence, capability, and relatedness to well-being, and the potential frustration if these needs are not met (Ibid).

However, and in accordance with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000b) regarding the role of frustration and its negative and positive impact upon the individual, it is my point of view that both the need for satisfaction and the existence of frustration should be looked on as essential interrelated mechanisms which are equally important in developing self-belief and self-reliance. Although there are differences in our capacities for managing challenging situations and overcoming adversity, using our capacities for self-awareness (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and independent functioning (Deci & Ryan, 1985) will strengthen resilience (Bonanno, 2004).

Vulnerability was recognised by participants and accepted by some, who understood that this had the potential for developing a sense of tolerance and understanding towards others and their cultures, their strength and their pain.

Being vulnerable is broadly seen as a basic condition for change in therapy (Rogers, 1957). However, it is my understanding, confirmed by the experience of the participants in this research and by myself, that the state of vulnerability as a condition for change is equally valid in vivo. It may be interpreted as resistance to change when a passive and victimized position is adopted. Nietzsche proposes 'self-overcoming' as a value that seeks to replace self-mastery as the central philosophical and cultural value (Molad, 2014) and calls for the practice of self-transformation, or metamorphosis. It was interesting that one participant described her experience in a way which echoed Nietzsche's (1997) stages of metamorphosis even though she had no previous knowledge of these.

In his three stages of metamorphosis the camel is seen as the first step in the quest for spiritual transformation. Here it chooses to confront difficulties, thus inevitably revealing its own vulnerability and by facing it moves into the next stage - that of the spirit of the lion. However, unrecognized vulnerabilities will prevent spiritual growth. This principle of empowering self-transformation was demonstrably experienced by one of the participants who during her first years in London could not recognize or accept and face feeling so vulnerable. She spent these initial years in a state of dissociation from herself, feeling desperate as a victim of her circumstances despite these being the results of her own choices.

When a person adopts the self-victimisation of Nietzsche's 'slave mentality' (1997) they feel disempowered and relinquish any locus of control over circumstances, despite their being the result of the individual's choice as above. Furthermore, from the descriptions of her experience in London and her failure to address her difficulties, she demonstrates a growing resentment which will inhibit her progress towards spiritual transformation. There is a

crucial moment, when by recognizing our own vulnerability we can progress to the next stage. There we can re-evaluate the values and social pressures to which we ascribed and choose to reject them. For the participant, it was recognizing her feelings of alienation and disempowerment which led to her pursuing her passions and study for qualifications. This experience has not completely shifted her perspective, but created a new momentum in which she has decided to approach her predicaments in a different way and exercise her freedom of choice and responsibility.

Vulnerability can be expressed as a feeling of rawness when we experience the collapse of old structures that have not yet been replaced. This kind of rawness and bareness is an ontological quality of our human condition which we are usually hiding (Welwood, 1982). When touching this vulnerability, we may connect with a different aspect of ourselves; a sort of alternative aliveness that changes our perception of the world (Ibid). Passive suffering might continue to be meaningless in terms of our life's goals. However, if we could channel this experience to our existential faith and commitment, we might draw meaning from it. This resonated very strongly with the participants' stories of being bi-rooted and their quest for deeper self-awareness once they accepted their vulnerability in their new lives. This in turn changed their perception and understanding of Self in their country of origin.

Existential thought encompasses the precariousness and fragility of life and the vulnerability that ensues. It can act as a springboard facing life's challenges and difficulties and by doing so open up infinite possibilities for living our life. This releases us from being a captive to stasis in order to avoid the existential anxiety that stems from these limitations (Kierkegaard, 1980). Life will inevitably bring many losses, disappointments, and hardships and challenges

but these are accompanied with opportunity to learn about ourselves, our values and the way we would like to live our life (van Deurzen, 2012).

In Nietzsche's third metamorphosis, the child, one opens up in a child-like manner to the wonders of life and one's own creativity, thus creating our own values.

However, it is important to point out that in my understanding the camel, the lion and the child do not possess an essence that can be fixed. There is no transcendence from one to the other, but a game of tensions. This is why affirmation is not understood as a binary differentiation with negativity. This idea of tension between oppositional pairs also guides the definition of notions like reason and emotions, feminine and masculine and vulnerability and strength. So there is dynamic movement between the different stages. This movement between one state to another and the tension between these stages was recognized by the participants as one of the stronger characteristics of their experience as a *bi-rooted* individual (Lussich, 2016).

Will to Power is a synchronised and developing movement where affirmation and negativity are in constant tension, leading to the construction of subjectivity and of both the active and passive forces that create the Will to Power (Lussich, 2016). In their fragility resides their own strength. Thus, the Eternal Recurrence is understood as a transition from negativity to affirmation; neither positivity nor negativity is transcended but maintained as forces in tension. When touching this vulnerability, we may connect with a different aspect of ourselves - a sort of alternative aliveness that changes our perception of the world (Ibid).

Another aspect of this fragility that unfolded from the texts is the development of self-reliance and resilience experienced by the participants. Resilience and self-reliance were

defined in the literature as an efficient coping mechanism and adaptive attitude following a stressful or traumatic life experience or life circumstances. Thus, not only does this involve the ability to retain a healthy balance in the face of adversity (Rutter, 2006; Silver, 2010), but if nurtured and developed may lead to the recognition of one's own prejudices and an open attitude toward the needs of others.

Psychologically, similar ideas about the effect of exposure to stress have been the subject of much research, one explanation being 'stress inoculation' (Lyons & Parker, 2007; Meichenbaum, 1993), or steeling, thriving and immunization (Rutter, 2006; Carver 1998). In consequence it has been argued that following a difficult experience 'Toughness' causes individuals to appraise similar situations positively (i.e., perceiving them as more manageable), and enables individuals to be more emotionally stable to cope with difficult stressors and minor psychological and physiological challenges, compared to non-toughened individuals (Seery, Holman & Silver, 2010). This resonates with Nietzsche's arguments in his book *Beyond Good and Evil* regarding the suffering and the difficulties that we face during our lives:

"That tension of the soul in misfortune which cultivates its strength, its terror at the sight of great destruction, its inventiveness and bravery in undergoing, enduring, interpreting, exploiting misfortune, and whatever of depth, mystery, mask, spirit, cunning and greatness has been bestowed upon it—has it not been bestowed through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering?" (Nietzsche, 2010 para 25).

Suffering and fragility are to be overcome by way of effort and striving. Commitment and dedication, combined with the willingness to put up with hardship, play an important role in the fulfilment of our existential quest for self-affirmation and self-assertion. The avoidance

of these were perceived as forces of decadence that led to the softening of the human spirit and a loss of focus upon the task of overcoming hardship essential to human advancement. Being emotionally exposed, experiencing pain and struggling would then not be meaningless and suffering would not be just frustrating or difficult if we include these in our life project. They can then validate our identity (van Hooft, 1998).

The question raised in this research is whether fragility and vulnerability in its expression or avoidance can create a deeper connection with Self. The participants' experiences were quite unanimously leaning towards this, and this has resonated with my own experience. Furthermore this vulnerability has contributed towards the development of an extended sense of empathy toward the 'Other'. Can we through our own vulnerability and our empathy with that of others, come to appreciate that we are all equally exposed to life's whims and find meaning in our own suffering and relief for others? These questions were not explored in the research per se but emerged from the texts.

This resonates with Levinas philosophical project which has at its heart the suffering of the 'Other'. The primacy of the suffering of others leads Levinas to argue, in '*Useless Suffering*,' (1982) that compassion is central to human subjectivity, in which it plays the important role of supreme ethical principle (Ibid). Compassion for the suffering of the 'Other' is one of the foundations of moral ethics. In '*Useless Suffering*' (1982) Levinas writes:

" [the end of theodicy]now demands even more from the resources of the I in each one of us, and from its suffering inspired by the suffering of the other, from its compassion which is a non-useless suffering (or love), which is no longer suffering 'for nothing,' and immediately has meaning ". (p100).

In the ethical perspective of the 'interhuman', suffering becomes meaningful when it is the compassionate suffering for the 'Other':

"In this perspective, there is a radical difference between the suffering in the other, where it is unforgivable to me, solicits me and calls me, and suffering in me, my own experience of suffering, whose constitutional or congenital uselessness can take on a meaning, the only one of which suffering is capable, in becoming a suffering for the suffering (inexorable though it may be) of someone else" (p.94).

Levinas argues that we are always already responsible for the suffering and vulnerable 'Other', prior to judgment, reflection, moral law, or moral reasoning. Levinas perceives the Self as the compassionate openness towards the 'Other' and not as a fortress. For him this is the ethical moment.

In addition, one could argue that we cannot have real power if we ignore a part of ourselves. Thus to feel empowered and internally grounded one may well have to internalise vulnerability rather than ignore it. This is contrary to only holding on to one part of ourselves that is perceived as strong and not experiencing all of ourselves, which would ultimately make us weaker in the true sense of the word.

In reality we all face our difficulties and we are confronted by existential issues, some of which relate to our ability to feel grounded in our lives and relate to others around us. However, the experience of the *bi-rooted* migrant highlights the urgency of self-rootedness. Remaining in a circle of victimisation and self- victimisation will inevitably lead to a sense of resentment, but choosing to navigate through these difficulties may infuse a 'given' situation with personal meaning.

In conclusion, the sense of vulnerability brought about by the experience of being *bi-rooted* was perceived by some of the participants as conducive to growth. Taking ownership of that vulnerability has proven to be a precious contributor to the expansion of Self and is perceived as positive experience. In contrast, adopting a more passive attitude resulted in being exposed and groundless. In both cases, it was acknowledged as a significant part of the lived experience and its impact on the sense of Self.

3. Being in Time - Temporality and the unknown future

Living between two or more geographical spaces seems to impact upon the ability to have a clear vision of the future. This emerges broadly and in different ways from the texts. This life choice has created variable factors which have made the vision of the future an impossible task. It seems as if the links between time and geographical space that are taken for granted for *mono-rooted* individuals do not allow a specific projection into the future, but rather the projection of possible potential futures. So, the separation between time and geographical space does infringe upon our ability to envisage the potential for a detailed projection into the future. Some interviewees have developed an anchor in their present life whilst one participant, who is still unanchored in Self and in her present, has an increasing feeling of rootlessness and a sense of drifting without a direction. This inability to envision the future was so engrained in one of the participant's experience that it was extended into the after-life; she could not decide whether she would like to be buried here or in her country of origin. She concluded that perhaps her ashes should be scattered in both countries. This made her painfully aware of the difference between her and her *mono-rooted* compatriots who would usually have a clear vision of the smallest details of their wishes, whilst she did

not even know where she wanted to be buried. Another participant was not able to consider any vision of her future until her children decide where they would like to establish themselves. Then and only then and by taking their choice into consideration, would she make her decision, even though she was perfectly aware of the futility of this attitude in a world that was constantly changing.

This uncertainty regarding the projection of a future is knitted into the experience of being *bi-rooted*. This has a strong impact on the present and the life choices that the participants are making but more pertinently on their experience of the dimension of time in conjunction with the separation between time and space.

Kierkegaard (2000) makes reference to existential time in his description of the very moment an individual commits himself, which in turn gives his life meaning and shapes his future. From this particular defining moment and henceforward, we not only become aware of the present and future infinite but it will inevitably also lead us to reinterpret the past through a new perspective. One of the participants reported that she is appreciating her childhood memories as more valuable than before. These memories were linked to the values that she grew up with and that she perceives now as being more pure and more moral. Her uncertainty regarding the future caused her to hold her past memories as the carrier of her moral compass in light of her experiencing London as a materialistic city destitute of moral values.

In my understanding, 'existential time' makes our perception of objective time possible in the first place. It is our underlying reflection on 'lived' time and relates to our awareness of relational time. It is experienced as relational, in so far as the past is represented in the form of memories, some of which may be very vivid regardless of the objective time that has

elapsed, while others are forgotten or vaguely remembered. The relation to memories may have a strong impact on one's way-of-being-in-the-world. Nevertheless, simultaneously, the past is processed and re-interpreted through the experience of being in the present. But how is the relational past impacted by the lack of a clear projection into the future?

The three dimensional structure of time itself (past, present, and future), is the horizon upon which the Self is able to become aware of itself (Van Deurzen, 2015). It serves as one of the scaffoldings upon which the Self is wrapped and contained. Indeed, the whole of our being is so connected to time that without it we may not have the foundation for understanding our own being.

The Self experiences the new possibilities of being in the world and re-forms itself, as it is by nature engaged in a continuous process of "becoming itself" (Sartre, 1996). Accordingly, our perception of time is constantly changing as the result of the Self naturally developing awareness and being able to envisage possible futures. Thus, we commit ourselves to having certain perceptions and expectations (and maybe hopes) for the future as a result of our emotional responses towards the past.

In *Being and Time*, (1996) Heidegger argues that human beings are thrown into their life project, and this definition of time is characterised by a forward trajectory from birth to an inevitable death. Each component of time, past, present and future has a role in the definition of ourselves and of movement in life. The past is the time when we can look back and recreate changing narratives based on our relationships and our closeness to the actual experiences that we are examining (Van Deurzen, 2015). The future is likewise significant, and our ability to contemplate it with honesty and openness increases in direct correlation with our ability to accept its inevitable end (Ibid).

Heidegger's (1996) coined the term 'Ec-stasies' of time in relation to the subject of temporality, where we are able to step outside ourselves both in recollecting our past experiences, and in presenting ourselves in the present. It is from this present position that we can strive for a possible future with all its potentialities, but also with its finitude.

1. The *past* is experienced as having been, forgetting or regretting (Gewesenheit), but also as recollecting or repeating.

2. The *present* is experienced as being, waiting or rushing (Gegenwart), but also as being there, and being with others with concern .

3. The *future* is experienced as going toward, longing or dreading (Zukunft), but also as being with anticipation and possibility, being towards death.

4. *Temporality* is experienced as being eternal or infinite (Ereignis), but also becoming and letting be; a moment of vision in which we take ownership of being in time.

Heidegger speaks of a vision, a moment of lucidity, in which past, present and future merge into one and expand beyond 'being in time' which can be seen as the experience of being authentically present in the 'now' (Van Deurzen, 2012).

It is interesting to view the interpretation of temporality in the *bi-rooted* individual experience which aligns with the above. The past that is held internally and is represented in the Self, is not represented concretely due to a geographical separation and therefore resides in the realm of the self-interpretation of recollections and memories clearly separated from the present. Viewing the past as part of our formative experiences while acknowledging that it is no longer part of the present also coincides with the concept of nostalgia (Sedikides et al, 2004) and its role in the *bi-rooted* migrant psyche. The future is

depicted as an embryonic vision of possibilities and potentials but is experienced as uncertain and unknown because of all the possibilities that are available to the individual. When projecting ourselves into the future, our awareness of these possibilities increase our ability to understand that we are not yet fully realized (Van Deurzen, 2012).

The present, in this context, is therefore an opportunity to relate to reality and the life lived by the subject, while holding both past and future as a dynamic concept which reflects my own experience and was reinforced by the participants' experience. This reflected most participants' experiences; they were not necessarily over anxious about this nebulous future, and in most cases rather displayed a strong commitment for the present. So, being aware of time in this way means we become capable of being fully present in the situation

Living with uncertainty regarding the future and not being able to project a clear vision of our future Self, while keeping strong connection with a past that is part of our life experience but that is clearly geographically separated, may bring us to Heidegger's fourth stage. Famously Heidegger spoke of the moment of vision, the Augenblick (blink of an eye), in which we somehow bring past, present and future vision into one, and rise above our being in time, temporarily overseeing life in an experience of authentic presence in the situation. living in temporality in which we take ownership of being in time.

Drawing on Giddens' (2008) theory on the separation of time and space (Giddens, 2008), it can be argued that there is no culture in which the individual does not have a sense of past, present and future. Every culture has forms of spatial markers and as individuals evolving within a culture we create an inherent link between time and space. In pre-modern time, time and place were connected through the 'situatedness' of place (Ibid) and in the ordinary activities of day to day life. The 'When' marker was connected to the 'Where' and to the substance of that conduct

within it. The separation of time from space involves above all the development of an 'empty dimension of time' (Ibid); the main lever that separate space from place. Many forms of lives are possible in social settings structured through the separation of time and space. This does not mean that from now on these will become alienated aspects of human existence in their social structure. Rather, and even more pertinent to the *bi-rooted* individual, it provides the very basis for the recombination of time and space in ways that coordinate social activities without referring to specifics of geographical place. The organisations of modern society are characterized by a new way of integrating space and time; this postulates the coordination of human actions whilst being physically absent from one another. The 'when' is connected to the 'where' in a different way through the intermediary of a new dimension.

The separation between time and space may create a void that is unnatural as a result of our cultural upbringing. However, as expressed by all participants with lucidity and great awareness, choosing to relocate, whilst keeping a firm anchor in another country, will inevitably create this separation as we are able to envisage many possibilities in a future linked to different geographical spaces. This will impact upon the way the *bi-rooted* migrant envisages the future as well as the significance of the choice of place, but even more will highlight the infinite choices that we existentially hold and their subsequent impact on the life we live. Thus, the temporal Self is, in its existence, its own being-towards-possibility: actively involved and always ahead of itself for which its own being matters. We are constantly relating ourselves to the world through ourselves (the self-referential Self). As self-relating entities, we are always encountering the future of possibilities — and if our existence is authentic — we own those possibilities.

4. Vertical roots and horizontal roots

Roots and reference to roots and to the different experience and their meaning emerged strongly as an integral part of the *bi-rooted* experience. The visual descriptions used by the participants were very personal; from the use of the metaphor of roots itself to the different trees representing an individual's rooting process. However, the original roots are described as strong and intrinsic to the participant's sense of self regardless of how integrated they feel in their present life. The new roots were not described as organically woven but rather as the result of active work and investment. They were not described as defining the individual but as dynamic and ever-changing and evolving in different directions. The meaning assigned to these roots differs for the participants, for some they are carried as a sense of freedom and for others as a sense of detachment and even alienation. The combination of both roots is essential to their description and the existence of this alternate root system is acknowledged throughout. One participant referred to her roots as the difference between the roots of an oak tree and these of an ivy bush. Another described her roots as that of a big tree full of generations upon generations of history in her country of origin, and a small young tree for her roots here; a new setting that may or may not take hold in the future of the family.

It seems that roots as metaphor are an inescapable aspect of personal, psychological, political and philosophical themes that keep emerging in a vast array of matters relating to human existence (Wampole, 2016). Roots include identity and politics, nationality and multiculturalism, memory and tradition in immigrants' cultures, local and universal in the time of globalisation. This metaphor was used in literature as much as it was used in theoretical exploration and conceptualisation.

The land and climate of a particular region are thought to transmit certain characteristics to its inhabitants, whose temperaments, language, and cultural production are heavily influenced by the topographical, meteorological, and botanical features of the place. This belief may stem from a concept used in agriculture describing the relationship between flavour and place (Ibid). But does the same hold true for humans? A new way of approaching roots, rootedness and rootlessness implies that certainties are hard to come by. How much of our identity relies on our roots and how can we redefine them? How negotiable is our sense of self? How much of our roots determine our actions?

The interesting picture of the concept of roots that emerges from this research lies in the definitions of two pairs of roots, the clear characteristics that separate them, but more importantly, the impact that these create together on the individual experiencing them. The picture that is created reveals two sets of roots that are different in form and substance but put together open up the opportunity to be existentially in the world.

The first, vertical set is deeply imbedded in the emotional realm of the subject. These are roots that develop organically from growing up in a place, where some of the processes of being rooted are conscious and others totally unconscious. They are described as grounding, but also absolute, and therefore have a built-in restrictive dimension and by so doing they define the individual. They give strength, but within this depth and stability resides their weakness.

Many writers have attempted to define roots, each according to their understanding and world's view. In her book *The Need for Roots*, Simone Weil (1952) defined roots as:

“Real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserve in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectation for the future” (P.41).

This definition of the meaning of roots does not necessarily include a geographical limitation, nor does it include a principal of exclusivity regarding roots and the need for them. It also does not refer to the past as being personal or a part of a local heritage. It is vast enough, but it does however include engagement in the community wherever this takes place and how the past and the future are preserved or expected to happen in the *bi-rooted* migrant’s universe. Could this definition allow space for the reflection on the role of roots in the *bi-rooted* migrant?

Another interesting exploration of roots can be found in Guillevic’s (1973), book *Racines* (quoted in Wampole, 2016). Guillevic wrote an entire poetry book which is an extended poem on the theme of roots. The energy that Guillevin’s poem expresses is the sense of a botanical embodiment of an underground ‘vital force’, a delving will that inserts itself consciously in the earth. It is an active process of reconnection. This will, according to him bears a resemblance to Heidegger’s gloss of the term ‘*Wesen*’, which generally means essence but which Guillevic (1973) perceives as *root-unfolding*. This pushing through the soil at a pace almost unnoticed by humans is an action of pure nature taking place as part of an organic growth process from childhood. However this does not necessarily imply that each individual going through this process will identify with it. On the contrary, he may very well rebel against it. But it is still the back drop for the rebellion and as such plays an important role in shaping one’s sense of Self. These roots were described as being so closely knitted into their sense of Self, that it was difficult to grasp their extent. However, these roots were

referred to by all participants as limiting, especially once they felt that they were growing new ones in their country of residence.

The second set is shallow by nature, as it has been acquired during adult life. It is rhizomatic (Deleuze, 1987) by nature, having multiple points of entry and multiple connections, and expands in different direction. It does not define the individual but allows him/her the freedom to choose to be flexible and fluid, and this is where its strength and also weakness resides. It allows freedom but supplies little grounding.

This interpretation is based on the rhizome, a philosophical concept created by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. It is used as a symbol of rootlessness and opposes traditional ideas of “rooted” where anything grows from roots, like a tree. Being a non-linear living organism, it has no beginning or end; it expands, continuously aiming to free itself from the forces that restrict it. The rhizome is a subterranean stem like a bulb or tuber so differs from roots (Ibid). Deleuze removes the rhizome from a possible relation with one central being and in contrast sees the rooted and centrally connected tree as the villain. The tree (and its vertical roots) symbolizes the dichotomy between subject and object, between signifier and signified, and by doing so is dichotomous. However, by privileging one sort of roots over the other, Deleuze is creating the very dichotomy of good and bad that he is criticising in the first place. Viewing both roots as the expression of different aspects of the human psyche and being able to experience both allows a more complete experience of Self. The rhizome requires a principle of multiplicity; therefore there is an attempt to avoid the dialectic of the one and the many. The many are part of a greater whole organised in such a manner that nothing new is created but that any multiple is only a reflection of the one (Adkins 2015).

“A multiplicity has neither subject or object only determinations magnitudes and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, P.9).

This perspective partially aligns with Papastephanou’s (2013) conception ‘eccentric perspective’ which was reflected by the participants. This implies that different interests and aspects are not orbiting around a single centre, and offers a new perspective on the relationship for the individual with multiple roots and multiple aspects of identity. This model better reflects the complexity and the precarious quality of the individual’s present attachment rather than focusing on restrictive single allegiances (Peters & Papastephanou, 2013), thus creating a polycentric alternative. The ability to create mobile and ever shifting centres might allow us to reduce the distance we hold towards the environment in which we circulate, rather than just altering the personal, emotional, and cultural filters through which we comprehend ‘otherness’.

Through the analysis of the interviews in this research, I came to see roots as a metaphor for the need for connection and as an answer to that need. Seeing both sorts of roots as one whole, allows the individual to experience both the grounding depth and strength of the vertical construct, while recognising its limitations. The shallow and horizontal roots, although they may not give the same sense of grounding, provide flexibility for the individual to change and create new strengths and so develop a more perpetually authentic way of being. These were described as young roots full of potential by one participant and far reaching with a potential to expand by another.

Both roots, as experienced by the cohort, became one construct in which the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. In this new construct the metaphor still exists but the rigid

differentiation between both roots seems to give way to a more inclusive construct, in which both roots inhabit and contribute to the experience of 'Self'. Thus, the *bi-rooted* migrant may benefit from these dual roots. That experience may be seen as a transformative experience resulting in broadening the individual's perspective of living 'in tune' with their sense of Self, and able to use both resources as needed.

These are important matters that emerged from this research. There is something universal about rootedness, whether it is exclusive, inclusive or located outside the geographical scope, into the personal habitat – the Self. We seek a context into which we may develop and be connected. But it remains to be seen how this connectivity will be reconciled with individual identities, with old brands of embeddedness, and with nostalgia for the first Garden of Eden.

5.4 Practical Application in Therapy

This research was conducted within the existential and phenomenological framework, allowing the existential dimensions to emerge from the participant's life experiences. As such it is opening a variety of practical applications in the field of existential psychotherapy. I would like to point out that existential psychotherapy is not a technic and does not ascribe to a certain way of doing things, but rather a certain way of being; an attitude held by the therapist whilst presenting his own authentic therapeutic persona. This research demonstrates the exemplification of the role that existential realities play in the human psyche. These realities are not part of an intellectual and abstract discussion but rather part of the human condition, and their exploration in therapy is a powerful tool to reaching a

broader understanding of self. As such offers a broader experience of self. This research offers new conceptualisation of these themes opening new avenues of exploration in therapy.

Possible Conceptual Elaborations:

1. The concept of the *bi-rooted* migrant challenges, and is challenged by, the concept of the roots, home and belonging as existing on one dimension. It proposes holding the potential duality, without attempting to blend them moving constantly on a continuum, and the tension it creates.

2. The concept of the *bi-rooted* migrant may expand the recognition of the intense dilemmas and affective power of that choice which holds potential for growth and self-development and does not only remove distress.

3. The *bi-rooted* points toward potential development of a new aspect in psychotherapy, providing a new conceptualisation within the broader approach of existential-phenomenological psychotherapy.

The quest for defining and redefining one's own identity is portrayed, in one way or another, in all the life stories disclosed in therapy. Our life story is often packaged and rehearsed, creating the sensation of 'stuckness' that is at the heart of the 'malaise' described by many clients. We have an 'official' version of the story of our life that tells about our childhood, about how our parents treated or mistreated us, about our siblings, our childhood relationship with them and what they did to us, our friends at schools, the teachers, and so on. Over the years, we learn to polish our biography and know how to tell it in the best way that will buy us the sympathy, empathy or even the love of those who listen to us, and will

fit the narrative that we keep telling ourselves. This story unravels in the therapy room. But maybe we can explore openly these formal stories and these 'official' private myths and in doing so we might discover that the memory of these experiences differs from our present perspective of them.

This is where the concepts that emerged from this research can be introduced, whether overtly, or held in mind by the therapist during the exploration of the story. Using the concept of time as a dynamic dimension, in which the client becomes aware of the multiple interpretations of past events from the present perspective and understands that these interpretations can be held simultaneously, is a powerful perspective to offer clients. As a result of that change the future opens itself up to unlimited possibilities impacting on the present. Not only has this relation to time allowed a richer version of past events but it gives the opportunity to multiple experience of self, raising the individual awareness to the fluidity of self.

This awareness encourages to individual to free themselves from original and absolute self-definition and therefore from the sense of 'stuckness' and it also creates a movement in tune with the concept of the fluidity of self.

When holding on to a narrative in the name of stability one contributes to the sense of immobility and stagnation so often described in therapy. We have become not only prisoners of these stories, but also their victims. If we allow ourselves to modify this formal story and accept that two (or more) versions can co-exist, then suddenly we may move freely within our own life.

Holding two or more conflictual or dual positions is part of a phenomenological and existential stance. Working with dualities, holding ambivalence, learning to use the tension between the paradoxes as a means to movement is at the heart of existential work. This research is an example of personal growth that such duality can entail. It is based on the exploration of multiplicity of roots demonstrating the empowering and growth potential that duality and dualism hold when we choose to face them and take ownership of our own paradoxes, conflicts and contradictions. The concept of 'Being in relativity' and adopting openness to the idea that nothing is held in absolute terms emotionally, psychologically and intellectually demonstrates the powerful nature of the combination of psychology and existential therapy. It encourages a flexible approach for the therapist and the client alike, promoting flexibility and ownership of change.

Likewise, '*home*' and '*not-being-at-home*' is not exclusively the faith of the migrant. '*Not being-at-home*' can manifest itself in a variety of situations in our lives, within our society, with our own family or within our own body to list just a few. Relating to multiple 'homes' on a relative continuum rather than a binary form, that negates or prioritise one of the sides, offers a new perspective on 'being at home' which challenges the notion of home as a place of inauthenticity and bad faith. It allows the individual to relate to being at home in different ways, including not being at home, rather than feeling an absolute sense of misfit.

The recurrent process of self is often obtained through the lived experienced of the client and through new perspectives of interpreting these experiences.

Roots are found in every aspect of our life, and the experience of rootedness and rootlessness may be relevant to the many changes we undergo. The concept of different roots with different characteristics and the creation of a dynamic construct around them is a

radical new perspective for any change that we make. We can still retain a connection to what we left behind, whether dealing with relationships, certain marking events or professional changes.

Choosing not to ignore the pain and the difficulties by working through them in order to achieve a possible healing is congruent with existential thoughts and existential psychotherapy. We may not need to choose between total isolation and totally losing ourselves in our social environment in order to be true to ourselves.

Similarly, by understanding the role of vulnerability as inter-relational, whether as part of therapy or in the relationships outside it, and accepting this as part of our authentic being, it becomes transformed. The sense of weakness associated with vulnerability becomes a new self-reliance and inner strength which stems from owning our vulnerable state. This inner strength can co-exist with the vulnerability, and so we can engage in our life in deeper and meaningful ways and in deeper relationships which in turn enrich our lives.

We are witnessing a progressive social movement toward accepting and sometimes celebrating differences and deem them multicultural, perhaps it is time to celebrate 'multicultural' differences and conflicts within the Self; complexity, difficulty, unfairness are equally important alongside wonder, beauty and grace. None of them can merge into a unidimensional way of being. It is within the realm of differentiation and acceptance that we start a quest for authentic living.

5.5 Reflexivity

This research has been for me an intensive and extremely enriching experience, albeit challenging at times, on all levels: psychological, emotional and intellectual. I officially embarked on this research three years ago. However, in reality this subject has been part of my life from my very early childhood; it was just not framed as a research project but rather as my 'life project'. Moving to multiple countries at different stages of my life has coloured my life and inhabited my thoughts and my emotional world as long as I can remember. So it was natural for me to want to investigate this subject as my doctorate project after initially examining and exploring its sustainability. However, as expert as I felt in this subject, I do not think that I was aware that my intention to research it within an academic framework would give it a whole new meaning. I thought that I had pretty clear views on my own experience and tried to bracket it or use it in the best way in order to uncover the participants' experiences. With time, opening myself to their experiences as well as exploring a very vast literature pertaining to the themes which I understood as central to this research, has impacted upon me profoundly. It has conceptualised and reshaped my experience in a new way.

This research has been such an intensive part of my life in the last few years, and has evolved with my professional and personal development as a result of my training, that I can barely identify with my thoughts about it at the start. Indeed I cannot imagine finishing it and moving forward, or that this project will not be an active part of my life.

So, I started my research with assumptions based on my experiences and I was curious to see if these experiences would prove to be similar to that of the other participants. These have

turned out to be sometimes completely different and sometimes similar, I felt that each of their experiences resonated with a part of myself and represented a stage in my journey. But more importantly, it has expanded my understanding of that phenomenon far beyond my own expectations.

I started the exploration intending to concentrate on the experience of being *bi-rooted* while concentrating on the meanings of roots and the relationships between the different set of roots. However, in the period of immersion, when I read and reread the transcripts and analysed them individually and then as a group, changing my gaze from extremely focused on one matter to having a larger and less focussed gaze in order to be able to see the big picture, something completely new to me emerged and captured my attention: the way of being that was experienced by the participants as well as by myself, a way that I have always known but never conceptualised in that way. This reconceptualization refers to the theme of relativity and of 'being in relativity' as a way of being in the world.

This insight, which had a very deep significance for me, hit profoundly an internal cord. It took me some time of walking around holding this idea until I felt it had matured enough to be formulated in words between 'me and myself' and following this to be communicated to others. It felt as if I had lived all my life in a certain way and this had acquired a whole new meaning. I was aware of the duality that has coloured my life all along, but this conceptualisation of the participants experience as well as mine has changed something fundamental in the understanding of myself and of the phenomenon of a being *bi-rooted* migrant and indeed in my understanding of the experience of being human. With it, the dichotomy of insider/outsider changed into a continuum, allowing space for defining my position as being a relative insider or outsider in addition to the either polarised or

ambiguous position that I held previously.

Using my interview for the pilot research was the first step in creating the juxtaposition of multiple lenses through which I was able to perceive the experience of being *bi-rooted*, and with it my very own and personal experience. I was surprised to see my own emphasis on certain aspects of my experience. I could really see the evolution within the experience from feeling completely alienated and feeling powerless into inhabiting my life and engaging in it, and then reverting to having doubts again and opening new avenues of exploration. I could really see this drama developing in front of my eyes which in itself changed my interpretation of my experience of being spectator and actor simultaneously.

Keeping an external objectivity while transcribing my interview proved to be most challenging. I am used to self-reflection from my own *insider* perspective but attempting to externalise this self-reflection created a perception that seemed both strange and unfamiliar. It was not that I was surprised by the content, but listening to myself talking about my roots made me also understand that these metaphorical constructs are in so many ways the result of subjective interpretations of our life, hence the definition of my vertical roots not being in my country of birth. However, some of the emphasis and some of the issues I raised were slightly different from what I had previously considered. For example, my need to emphasise the difficulty of the beginning of my stay in London and my determination to make sure that those challenging times were documented truly surprised me, and were slightly embarrassing. It made me realise that however content I am with my life at present, and the overall personal benefit I have gained from going through that existential crisis, I still need to make my difficulty heard, and I was wondering how my participants would react in this situation.

Transforming my own experience into data and being able to address it as such is a very interesting process. Analysing it was as interesting as anticipated. Moving along the line of the personal, the psychological and the philosophical, was not only fascinating from a research point of view, but it helped identify my own biases and improved my abilities to conduct that very personal research in a reliable and more rigorous manner.

And yet I was not 'grazing' too far from the comfort zone of the general sense of my experience. Working on the pilot and constructing a body of work to include all the components of the dissertation gave me some confidence regarding my ability to develop that on a larger scale.

Listening to the stories of my participants and their interpretation or views of their experience, and engaging with them openly and honestly shed a whole new light on the subject. For example the theme of home and belonging and the tension between them that has been a theme I spent my life exploring in relation to my own experience and that of my family has found a new meaning. I never anticipated the personal importance of that conceptualisation of this phenomenon would have for me and for understanding my experience, but also for my understanding of human nature in general. Discovering the possibility of 'being relatively' in a certain way has opened up a new possibility of perceiving my experience of Being and that of others.

Similarly, the dimension of time and the lack of clear vision of the future was something I was aware of before I started this research. However, this way of being reached a depth that was not there before and with it a fundamentally different view of the implications it has on my life. The relationship between my present and my past, with my ability or inability to make plans, has been transformed. It is difficult to exactly define the quality of this

transformation but its presence is felt very strongly. I realise how this nebulous future and its connection to a specific location has impacted upon me which in turn changed my perception of Self.

From the start I viewed myself as both insider and outsider in this study, mirroring precisely the position of a *bi-rooted* migrant. Hence my choice of research reflects something of my own experience. I accepted this dual position as a given and I had to decide how to work with it. My involvement had to be monitored carefully so that it contributed to the research and did not overtake or hinder possible insights arising from it. Being a “professional migrator” has been an advantage to the research as much as it could have become a disadvantage if it had not been acknowledged. In order to keep track of this I kept a regular journal and documented my thoughts and processes.

Issues have been discussed at length in the framework of my personal therapy which became an integral part of this project and an invaluable space for reflection on my personal connections with the research, as well as generalising and the abstraction of these personal insights. In parallel, framing all these insights into that of academic project were supported by my supervisor. These dialogues worked in synergy and produced a sound supporting system. I hoped that this will help to clarify a potentially difficult process and by doing so it will help reach the transparency required for a reliable piece of research.

I thought that my personal origin might impact upon the reactions of potential participants and their views of me and the aim of my research, as well as the impact upon my own views and sense of responsibility that arose from my personal political opinions, but it has not proved itself to be problematic. Perhaps it is my own apprehension of how I am perceived, and what responsibility that I feel I am carrying for the political situation in this country I

consider as my country of origin.

My experience of being interviewed by my therapist felt natural; being a *poly-rooted* migrant has always been part of my psychological makeup and as such has been part of my exploration in therapy. I felt safe and at ease as having been in therapy since I started my study allowed me to develop a strong therapeutic alliance. This contributed to the sense of safety and encouraged an open and honest dialogue. It is from this viewpoint that I conducted my interviews. As a therapist, I am conscious of the assumptions that my clients might be making about me and vice-versa and as a researcher I hoped to maintain a high level of self-awareness.

However, I was surprised by my own resistance to any aspect of the literature that implied a re-creation of Self as solely a reflection of exposure to the new culture. I discovered that I am ready and happy to acknowledge all the changes and shifts in my perception that resulted from my experience but was not ready to acknowledge that this transformation was influenced by the percolation of the British culture around me on an unconscious or even conscious level. It led me to realise that perhaps not all of the changes are a result of authentic insights, thus diminishing some of the idealised aspects of my experience. However, it added an additional dimension that made my research and understanding more complex and richer.

This research has been simultaneously a personal and a professional journey, its endless depth shifts and changes and the possibility of discovering new aspects of the experience as well as new aspects of myself have been truly fascinating. It has raised as many questions as it has answered surrounding experience of being *bi-rooted* and the different meanings of roots. It has left me wondering if I answered the questions I set myself at the start of this

project; are the concepts that emerged truly new genuine concepts, such as is the concept of being in relativity or are they merely pragmatic compromises for framing an experience? Could these concepts and insights apply in different situations, could they be validated in different research? However, this research will evolve and inspire others to carry on exploring this subject, or one of the themes that has emerged from it as it has already had a transformative impact on at least one person.

For the Traveler - John O'Donohue (Dec, 2016)

Every time you leave home,
Another road takes you
Into a world you were never in.

New strangers on other paths await.
New places that have never seen you
Will startle a little at your entry.
Old places that know you well
Will pretend nothing
Changed since your last visit.

When you travel, you find yourself
Alone in a different way,
More attentive now
To the self you bring along,
Your more subtle eye watching
You abroad; and how what meets you
Touches that part of the heart
That lies low at home:

How you unexpectedly attune
To the timbre in some voice,
Opening in conversation
You want to take in
To where your longing
Has pressed hard enough
Inward, on some unsaid dark,
To create a crystal of insight
You could not have known
You needed

To illuminate
Your way.

When you travel,
A new silence
Goes with you,
And if you listen,
You will hear
What your heart would
Love to say.

A journey can become a sacred thing:
Make sure, before you go,
To take the time
To bless your going forth,
To free your heart of ballast
So that the compass of your soul
Might direct you toward
The territories of spirit
Where you will discover
More of your hidden life,
And the urgencies
That deserve to claim you.

May you travel in an awakened way,
Gathered wisely into your inner ground;
That you may not waste the invitations
Which wait along the way to transform you.

May you travel safely, arrive refreshed,
And live your time away to its fullest;
Return home more enriched, and free To balance the gift of days which call you

Chapter 6

6.1 Conclusion

At the conclusion of this project I am left reflecting on the accomplishment of the idiosyncratic structure of this dissertation and its development through phenomenological analysis, rather than the more conventional presentation which includes a traditional literature review and theoretical approaches. It is my understanding now that this structure enabled me to retain the lived experience, constantly moving from the particular to the general and universal in line with the hermeneutical tradition. By doing this, I obtained detailed descriptions which retained my individual voice at their core, while providing a level of abstraction which allow the existential dimensions to be exposed. It further emerges with psychological, philosophical and spiritual dimensions and offers a new directed orientation that includes tension between multiple modes of being, the moods that it suggests and individual choices. It further exposes definitions of roots, home, belonging as being the illustration of the ontic-ontological significance inherent to human existence.

The concept of the *bi-rooted* migrant frames the experience of migrating in a new way but further exemplifies an approach addressing issues in phenomenology, philosophy and psychology. This formulation highlights the tensions pertaining to human existence emerging from the relationship between being and context. It exemplifies the fundamental relation between freedom and finitude. It is best expressed in the innovative understanding of abstract concepts such '*home*', '*belonging*', '*roots*' ,'*time*' and *self*.

This phenomenological exploration of the *bi-rooted* migrant has exposed a fascinating mosaic of colourful and rich lived impressions. Through my subjective interpretation this mosaic has taken shape and led to several emerging themes.

The theme of relativity has emerged strongly and has manifested itself on multiples levels. 'Being in relativity' means being consciously present in one place and in one moment while holding the knowledge that a different, intimately known reality is happening in a different place; a reality carrying various multi-dimensional characteristics such as physical sensations and weather conditions, personal involvement, emotional impact, cultural and linguistic environment, social context and perhaps a spiritual connection. This way of being creates a domino effect reaching into the deepest part of the Self and permeating into its most intimate parts. This theme is intrinsically knitted into the experience of being *bi-rooted* and is in part reflecting the essence of this phenomenon. Simultaneously holding two or more potential ways of being is radically different to creating a blend of both. It requires investing in and building a dynamic relationship with two different geographical, cultural and social entities which results in the possibility of having double roots. This is described implicitly throughout the text in a continuous movement that has transformed the way the participants have perceived themselves and their environment. This resonates with Existentialism that rejects the concept of absolute and constant ground when examining every aspect of our life.

It is not about demarcating oneself in opposition to the 'Other' as much as consciously moving toward oneself and so becoming closer to a real Self; reaching a better grasp of how there is an ever-changing sense of self. An authentic experience of the fluid Self can be achieved only through that understanding.

It is not only about the ability to hold and be aware of both potential positions together, while shifting between the two, but rather a real understanding at a deeper level that nothing is absolute and that no one position is ever reflecting an absolute truth. This deep

understanding that all and everything is relative includes the most important emotional attachments and values we hold dear. This is all part of a story we choose to tell ourselves, and that in different circumstances would become different stories. This creates a tension that may be expressed and experienced differently, one time it may feel insufferable whilst other times it feels like a privilege.

Living in the space held between two emotional and physical 'homes' and constantly moving from one to the other as testified by the participants, combined with the lack of a support system in the country of residence, resulted amongst other things in a sense of exposure. A sense of precariousness is described as part of the experience to differing degrees; there is a sense of instability and uncertainty expressed through feelings of being exposed and living with a sense of personal vulnerability. This precariousness is shared by human experience in general, but it is felt by the *bi-rooted* individual in a vivid and experiential way.

Being a *bi-rooted* migrant creates variable factors which make a clear vision of a future impossible. It emerged from the interviews that the links between time and geographical space that are taken for granted for *mono-rooted* individuals do not allow a specific projection into the future, but rather the projection of possible potential futures. This impacted on the relation of the individual with the present and with an acceptance of the uncertainty in life.

Finally, the metaphor of roots was an integral part of the description of this phenomenon and created a new meaning for this metaphor. Rather than being experienced as a concentric concept with a central anchor around which the whole construct of Self occurs it is experienced as an open and dynamic interconnected construct, continually becoming, and reflects the Self while simultaneously shaping it. Thus, 'self-diversity' is an internal process

that includes internal dual referencing that opens up the possibility of developing new narratives that are themselves provisional and temporary.

Exploring the experience of the *bi-rooted* individual raised many existential issues all related to the lived experience of the participants in this research. These themes are not the exclusive fate of the *bi-rooted* migrant, rather than being simply a theoretical concept, these themes are present in the *bi-rooted* migrant's life in an experiential manner. The inter-subjectivity of this research raises the awareness of the infinite possibilities in life that lie in the tension between finitude and choices. It may highlight the impact of changes of circumstances on our lives, but also our capacity to infuse meaning into our experience when we are ready to make existential choices. It emphasizes the uniqueness of seminal experiences that transforms one's life and the potential to live the life that we choose. What has been seen and experienced through the *bi-rooted* lens with its richness and complexity, laying bare existential issues, cannot be unseen hence its long term impact of self-perception and as a result of one's world perception.

This research has answered some questions whilst opening new avenues of exploration. I am hoping that the reader will find their own interpretation of it, forming a new point of view that may expand on my vision of this experience and carry it forward. The questions that are asked throughout the research hopefully will become the basis for further work investigating our ever-changing way of being in this ever-changing world.

Ithaka – C. P. Cavafy

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,

so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.



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Appendices

1. Sample of Pilot Interview Transcript
2. Participant Information Sheet
3. Informed Consent Form
4. De-briefing Form
5. Guideline Interview Questions
6. Sample of Creative Coding
7. Sample of Coded Text
8. Sample of Portrait Coded Interview
9. Sample of Text Analysis
10. Research Diary Entry

1. Sample Pilot Interview

Date: 21 March 2017

Interviewee: Nancy Hakim Dowek – Code name **N1**

M1: Why did you move to this country?

N1: I moved to this country because I followed my partner. We were living in TA at the time and could not take it anymore...it was hard for him. We decided that we will stick together, we will move to London and we will have a child. It was a way that we could stay together despite the differences.

So, I moved here and knew nothing about here basically, I had no idea what I was moving to. I was heavily pregnant and I was so taken by my pregnancy that I was not thinking what will happen the day after. I was so inside my own bubble.

M2: So that particular time because of that...because of...

N2: I don't know how I would have felt moving a year earlier or a year later, but this specific moment, I was completely inside myself I was not thinking of what it means + I remember thinking, it is easy to close.

M3: Close...

N3: Closing I close my bank account, my taxes... you have to do all sort of things when you move from a country. I remember I had a friend who asked me how I feel about it. I remember thinking this is easy. Closing is easy, maintaining is difficult. This was my...at the time I had no idea where I am moving to and how my life is going to look like. I had zero ideas about that.

M4: once you moved here, the beginning ... how was it like? The experience

N4: the first month, I think, it was just before me giving birth, so it was busy finding a hospital a doctor it was practical stuff, I needed a home a flat to move into. There were so many practical things that I did not have "etats d'ame" I was not thinking about any of it. I just remember not understanding, I did not understand the system, I did not understand the NHS.

M5: kind of disorientation...

N5: yes, I became much more dependant my partner, because I did not know at all how things were working and I was not there, I just followed. I remember feeling I don't understand what is going on. Yeah...disorientation is exactly the word of how I feeling at start.

M6: And in relation to your country of origin? what is your relationship, and what is your country of origin?

N6: exactly... that's... that's I...

M7: What would you call your country of origin? Is there a country of origin for you?

N7: I say, when I am thinking about it in my head and in my heart, Israel is my country of origin. Which in fact is true, it is more complicated than that. And because I was born in Lebanon but I kind of don't have a relation to that place that is ongoing... I never came back; I left at the age of 11 and never, came back. And everything that is meaningful happened to me in Israel. So, I think of Israel as my country of origin, although it is not true and I know that also emotionally it is not completely true. Because I always have a kind of ambivalence; either wanting to be Israeli more than the Israelis or feeling an outsider for various reasons anyways.

M8: ambivalence?

N8: yes...in the sense that I was different by definition. And I was also different because half of my family was still living in Beirut and both countries are at war, it was kind of a situation that was a bit out of the ordinary, I would say.

M9: yes... at the moment, what is your relation to that?

N9: I am...at the moment, again I think, I feel ambivalent. Because on the one hand I feel I have there a home in there, in an emotional sense. In relations with people, in the way I can find my ways there, in the way I can do things easily because I know how it works. And especially more than anything else is my relationship with people I have there. The friends, very very close friends. I am still reading an Israeli newspaper every morning. So, I know what is going on, although I am not there, and it is not the same. I know politically what is happening. I read about what is happening; If there is a new theatre play or a new movie, an Israeli movie. I know what is going on. I am not very connected to the musical scene but other things I am quite connected to this country.

Having said that, every time I go there, I ask myself and wonder how it is going to be this time. Because every time I go, I have different feelings about my stay there depending on... I even don't know what it depends on really.

M10: I don't know if it is the right place to ask. But what feeling does it evoke in you this connection that you still have.

N10: warmth, I would say, warmth ...familiar....and familial also. There is something of a family there although my family is not there all. I only have there my mother and my brother but it has this familial feel to it. There is and there not a sense of belonging. It is more of an ambivalent position for me. But that how it was. So that there is nothing new to me but as grow up and as I change, the colour of that ambivalence changes as well. Sometimes ... it changes and shapes itself all the time. But there is a sense of belonging but also a sense of ambivalence towards it.

2. Participant Information Sheet



Research Proposal: A Phenomenological Exploration into the Experience of Being Voluntarily Uprooted, of Laying Down New Roots, the Reciprocal Relations between those Roots and their Impact on the Sense of Self.

Nancy Hakim Dowek. DProf research project. NSPC and Middlesex University

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London
NW6 1DR

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London NW4 4BT

Dated:

Dear

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

This study is being carried out as part of my studies at NSPC Ltd and Middlesex University. This project aims to explore the experience of people living voluntarily with dual roots. People who have elected to live in the UK but that are keeping very close ties to their country of origin. The aim of the research is to find out how this way of living impacts on your sense of self. Do you feel different in each country or you do you feel the same? This study will attempt to explore existential aspects of the phenomenon of living with two sets of roots. You should explain the reason why participants' co-operation is requested, i.e. the background and aim of the research and why it is important. I hope this study will interest voluntary migrants and locals alike as well as having professional relevance to therapists working with people from various cultures.

Why have you been chosen?

You are being asked to participate because you have replied to my advertisement and met the following conditions:

- 1. You are currently living in London and moved here at least 10 years ago, and you are keeping close connections to your country of origin such as family, friends, economic interests and political interests.*
- 2. You have moved to London voluntarily, and could potentially choose to go back to your country of origin at some point in the future.*
- 3. You are happy to share your experience and to reflect on it.*

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to an interview with me. The interview will take place at the NSPC in a private and quiet room. The interview will last between 60 to 90 minutes. It can be interrupted if you feel you need a break otherwise it will be conducted without one. The interview is conversational and you will be asked open questions regarding your experience. There is no specific agenda except the exploration of your own experience. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcript of the interview for comments and clarifications. The transcript will be analysed with the interviews of all other participants, in the hope that universal themes will emerge from all your experiences.

What will you do with the information that I provide?

The interview will be transcribed by me. I will be recording the interview on a digital recorder, and will transfer the files to an encrypted USB stick for storage, deleting the files from the recorder. From that point your details will be anonymised so that no one will have any knowledge of your name or other identifying details. All of the information that you provide will be identified only with a project code and stored either on the encrypted USB stick, or in a locked filing cabinet. I will keep the key that links your details with the project code in a locked filing cabinet. During the research process, my supervisors will see the data and review my work but as mentioned above your details will have been anonymised prior to this. The confidentiality of your details are bound by the Middlesex university research code of ethics. The information will be kept at least until 6 months after I graduate, and will be treated as confidential. If my research is published, I will make sure that neither your name or nor other identifying details are used.

Data will be stored according to the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Exploring significant experiences might bring up difficult emotions. If you are currently experiencing high volumes of stress and feel that exploring your experience will add to your current stress level or if you feel that exploring your experience requires further superior professional support. Then perhaps it is not right for you to participate in this study. If during the interview you are experiencing such difficulties, please let me know, and if you wish, I will stop the interview. Although this is very unlikely, should you tell me something that I am required by law to pass on to a third person; I would have to do so. Otherwise whatever you tell me will be confidential.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will have the opportunity to reflect and give a voice your own experience. Exploring significant experiences and reflecting on them may have a soothing and positive effect on the person experiencing them and may prove to be a significant experience for the participant. There is no intended material benefit to the participant from taking part in the study. Participating in a research about a topic close to your heart that might be published might prove satisfying. You may develop a deeper understanding of your own experience in light of that participation and of its results. We do not know the effects of living with dual roots, but it is possible it will be helpful for some psychotherapy clients in the future.

Consent

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your personal records, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins.

What happens if I change my mind?

Please note that you can withdraw from the research project at any time. Before or after the interview, during the whole data analysis process and until the dissertation is submitted.

Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. The NSPC research ethics sub-committee have approved this study

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

If you have any further questions, you can contact me at:

NSPC - 61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
United Kingdom
NH270@live.mdx.ac.uk

If you any concerns about the conduct of the study, you may contact my supervisor:

Niklas Serning
NSPC - 61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
United Kingdom
niklas@serning.com

Or

The Principal
NSPC Ltd. 61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
Admin@nspc.org.uk
44 20 7624 0471

3. Informed Consent Form

Informed consent



New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling Written Informed Consent

Title of study and academic year: DProf in Existential Psychotherapy & Counselling by Professional Studies - 3rd Year

Researcher's name: Nancy Hakim Dowek

Supervisor's name and email: Dr. Niklas Serning - niklas@serning.com

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.
- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.
- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

Print name

Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Health and Education Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

4. Debriefing form

Debriefing



Researcher: Nancy Hakim Dowek

Supervisor: Dr. Niklas Serning

Date: _____

Research Proposal: A Phenomenological Exploration into the Experience of Being Voluntarily Uprooted, of Laying Down New Roots, the Reciprocal Relations between those Roots and their Impact on the Sense of Self.

Thank you for participating in my research. Your contribution without which the study would not be possible is very valuable and appreciated.

The research is aiming to explore the lived experience of living in in an elected country for a period of at least 10 years while keeping close ties to the country of origin - in effect having multiplicity of roots, and how keeping both sets of roots relevant and meaningful affect the sense of self.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to get in touch with me if you have any further queries, any questions regarding the research or indeed any concerns or difficulties following the interview due to the emotional content that may have surfaced.

Contacts for further information:

Researcher: Nancy Hakim Dowek, NSPC, 61-63 Fortune Green Road, London NW6 1DR. email: NH270@live.mdx.ac.uk

Research supervisor: Dr. Niklas Serning - niklas@serning.com

NSPC - Tel: +44 (0) 207 435 8067 // 0203 515 0223

You can find a therapist on the UKCP website:

http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/find_a_therapist.html

Other sources of support and low cost counselling:

Immigrant counselling and psychotherapy: <http://www.icap.org.uk/>

HMC - <http://www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk/about>

Sangam - <http://sangamcentre.org.uk/>

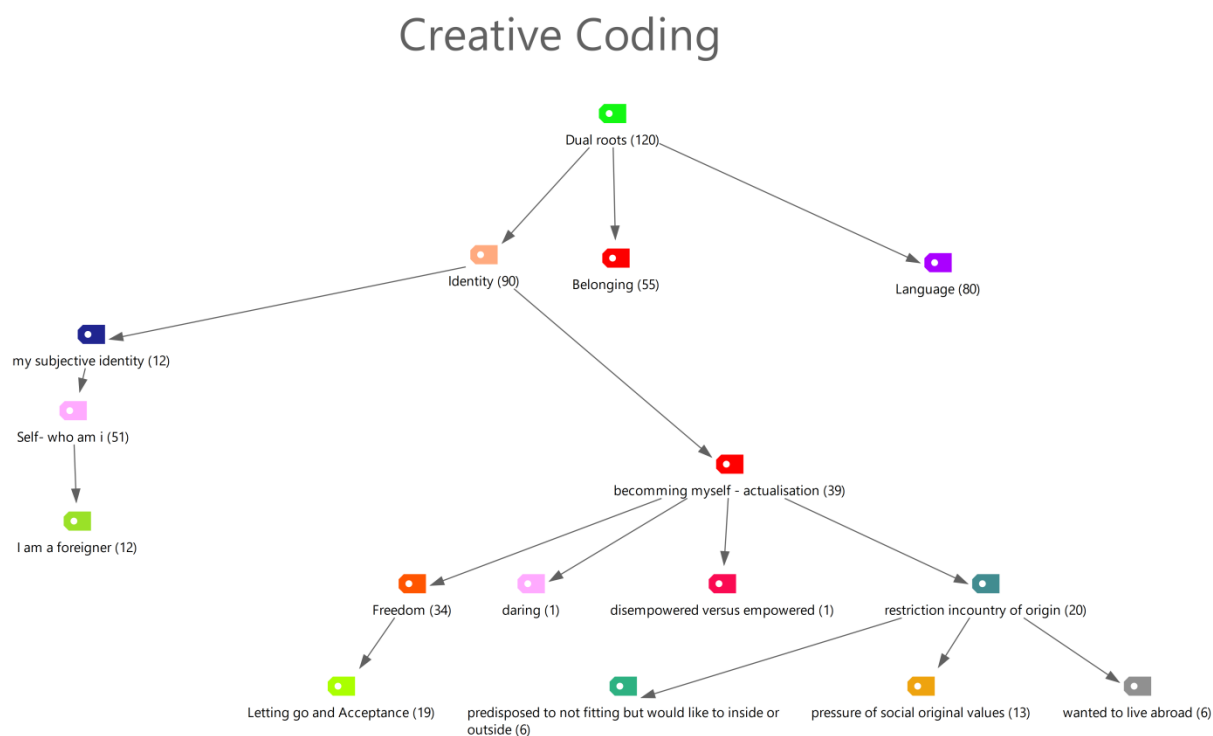
Mind - <http://www.mind.org.uk/?gclid=CPfljfmW-9ACFUI8GwodsmUM0Q>

5. Guideline Interview Questions

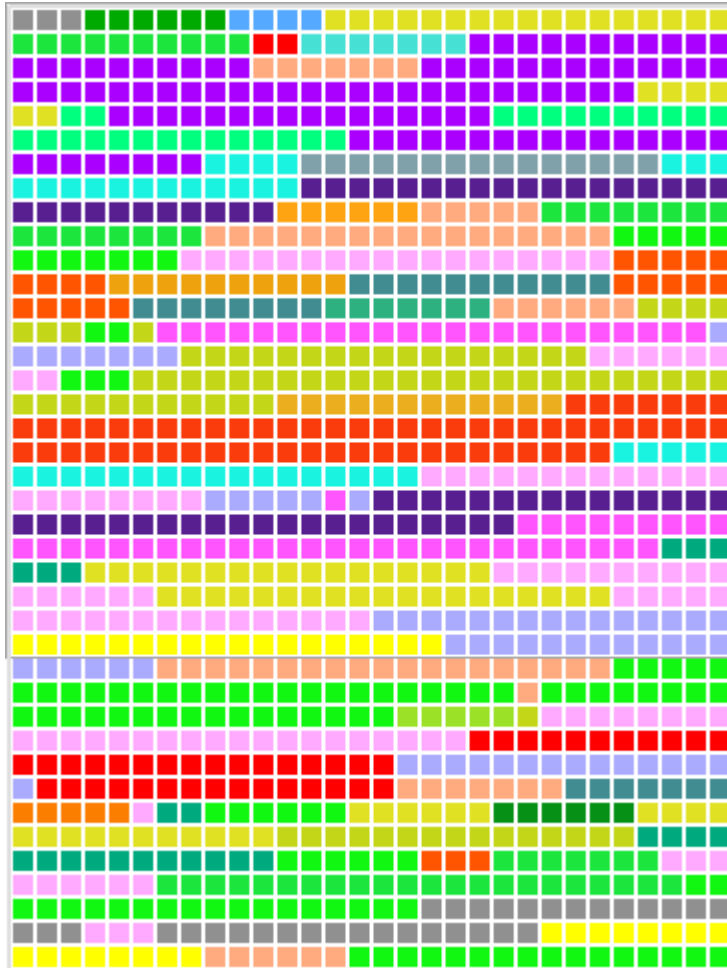
1. Tell me about your reasons to move to this country. (Why here, why then?)
2. Tell me about your experience of moving to this country? What was it like?
3. Can you please describe your relation to your country of origin?
4. How does it feel to live here but still be connected to your country of origin?
5. Can you tell me what is like for you, when you go back to your country of origin?

(with a possible addition of 'what feelings emerge...' if they don't get there themselves)
6. What is it like when you visit your country of origin?
7. What is it like to be connected to two places? How similar or different are the connections?
8. How do you identify yourself in both places? How do you experience yourself?
9. How did you first feel when you moved to London? And how does it feel now?
10. How does it feel expressing yourself in English as opposed to your mother tongue?

6. Creative coding Sample



7. Profile of one full interview in colours



8. Coded segment screen shot

symbol of infinity - Google Search x Coded segments x screen shot of laptop - Google S x +

File | file:///C:/Users/Nancy/AppData/Local/Temp/Coded%20segments.html

Apps Save to Mendeley Imported From IE ידועות אחרונות - ידועות, חדשות, BBC News - Home Email Login Page Google Other bookmarks

Color	Comment	Document group	Document name	Code	Begin	End	Weight score	Segment	Area	Coverage %	Author	Creation date	Memos	Other codes assigned to segment	Duration
●		Pilot Interview transcript	Making a Choice\Put personal choice ahead of geography		6	6	0	We decided that we will stick together, we will move to London and we will have a child. It was a way that we could stay together despite the differences.	154	0.29	Nancy Hakim Dowek	04-Jun-17 14:39:58	Nancy Hakim Dowek, 11-May-17 7:31 AM Title: Memo 2 Personal tendency to detach or the result of a personal history or result of not fitting completely in from the start		
●		Pilot Interview transcript	no previous knowledge/ no preparation		7	7	0	I moved here and knew nothing about here basically, I had no idea what I was moving to	86	0.16	Nancy Hakim Dowek	04-Jun-17 14:40:47			
●		Pilot Interview transcript	inside my bubble		7	7	0	I was heavily pregnant and I was so taken by my pregnancy that I was not thinking what will happen the day after. I was so inside my own bubble.	144	0.27	Nancy Hakim Dowek	04-Jun-17 14:41:47			
●		Pilot Interview transcript	inside my bubble		9	9	0	I was completely inside myself I was not thinking of what it means	66	0.12	Nancy Hakim Dowek	04-Jun-17 14:44:12			
●		Pilot Interview transcript	Emotional Attachment		9	9	0	I remember thinking, it is easy to close.	41	0.08	Nancy Hakim Dowek	04-Jun-17 14:45:01			

Type here to search

100% ENG 06:42 16/11/2018

9. Text analysis Sample

The screenshot displays the NVivo 12 software interface for a text analysis project. The main window is divided into several panes:

- Document System:** A list of documents on the left, including 'Anna Interview Transcript', 'Catalina Interview Transcript', 'Maria Interview transcript', 'Mercedes Interview Transcript 1', 'Monika Interview transcript', 'Pilot Interview transcript' (selected), 'Stella Interview Transcript', and 'Sylvia interview transcript 1'. Below this is the 'Sets' section.
- Code System:** A hierarchical list of codes on the left, including 'becoming detached', 'relationships' (with sub-codes 'old relationships' and 'New relationships'), 'disempowered versus empowered', 'Taking care of the parents', 'built in fragility', 'looking for acceptance from the environment', 'Self- who am i' (with sub-codes 'I am a foreigner' and 'daring'), 'digital technology' (with sub-codes 'staying in touch' and 'choice that I can change'), and 'choice that I can change'.
- Pilot Interview transcript:** The central workspace showing a text excerpt. A portion of the text is highlighted in orange: "not very nice but it is as if I am saying, I see more than you do. If you are only here or only there all you see is only here or only there. I am wearing those glasses that have more than 180 degrees." Below this, there are several lines of text, some of which are also highlighted in orange.
- Retrieved Segments:** A list of segments on the right, each with a corresponding text excerpt. The segments are: 'Pilot Interview transcript' (6 - 6), 'Making a Choice', 'Put personal choice ahead ...', 'Pilot Interview transcript' (7 - 7), 'no previous knowledge/ no ...', 'Pilot Interview transcript' (7 - 7), 'inside my bubble', 'Pilot Interview transcript' (9 - 9), and 'inside my bubble'.

The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system clock indicating 16:50 on 02/12/2018.

10. Research Diary Sample

April 2016

When one feels a sense of belonging to the place you come from, you are confronted with the non- belonging or not identifying with the cultural/moral values of the new place.

1. Ascribing to a more universal (higher) set of value might give you a sense of belonging (like fellow human) but this means letting go of attachment to the local values creating a conflict : the paradox of fear of losing oneself if letting go of the past but without doing so giving up on the future.
2. Ascribing to higher spiritual dimension again will allow you to identify and belong in a different way.
3. Ascribe to non -cultural or geographical values like religion can give the sense of belonging and purpose that one is looking for (look to radicalisation of young Muslims in Europe today)
4. Another parameter is the age of the immigrant , more difficult to become old in a place you were never young because all people see is the old man, while people who knew you younger will also remember you younger therefore more relevant. Group – conflict resolution (London – Tel aviv) universal versus personal : my place in the world finding roots in the universal values versus local belonging

May 2016

Dream – my Israeli friend (who represents all that is possibly gentle and sane in Israel) is very cross at me, why was not there to help with the logo and I should have. I feel terrible that he is crossed at me, I let him down and letting others down. Am I being selfish, what is my

responsibility toward my country /my people? Concentrating now on my studies, it is filling me with so much, is it possible that I forgot the others in my life? That I forgot my sense of belonging and the responsibility that comes with it?

October 2016

How do different people process the uprooting experience as they phenomenologically live the experience existentially and what are their personal growth or not of that experience. Is my experience just totally personal? Do I share part of it with others? How does my personal and national history connect with the stories of others.

October 2016

Le regard des autres, qui je suis si je ne sais pas lire dans le regards des autres? Immigration and the look – Do I learn about myself from the look of others? Can I have a clear picture of my identity outside this look?

April 2017

Experience of transcribing my interview –

Difficult to hear myself. I am surprised by how important it is for me to highlight the difficulties I have encountered when moving here. The story seems so familiar and yet hearing it and reading it outside myself, makes me feel weird as if I am inside and outside myself.

June 2017

First interview – her experience resonates so strongly with mine. Her vocabulary and choice of words is similar to mine and yet everything about our personal history is completely different .

July 2017

I am in Israel, analysing my interview and writing my RP1. At first it is strange to write this here in Israel. Then it becomes natural. It occurs to me that it is exactly how I feel when I first arrive here. First it is strange because it is familiar and different at the same time. I like the idea that my feelings writing the RP1 are similar to my personal experience when I am here

September 2017

Sometimes I have the feeling that each interview resonate a part of my experience. I feel so privileged to be able to conduct this research.

Mars 2018

We are habitant of a space coloured by a limbo flavour. In reality as human we all inhabit that space but as by rooted migrant the urgency of self rootedness surfaces with more clarity. We can chose to get lost in it, to get stuck in it (staying in the victim position) or navigate it through infusing the tension that is created by this position our personal meaning.

Even in an existential set and scenery we are still choosing how to write the script of our life. This tension may know various shading and some time may feel insufferable whilst other time feel like a privilege. Self diversity ie internal multiculturalism and internal dual reference in always and at any given time is a given of that narrative.

I chose to write my findings analysis and discussion in both countries as the expression of my state of being and my understanding of that position and what is the meaning it has for me.

The difference between fluid and relative - and how and when they coincide.

Relative means really being into place while holding the knowledge that the other exist. It requires investing and building resulting in the possibility of having more than one home in a relative way.

Emotional relativity and provisional belonging.

M.- de marking oneself from the them does not necessarily mean stepping toward authenticity sometime you step into a different them - and you become trapped in it. You have to consciously walk toward yourself; your real self to reach a better grasp on t your sense of ever changing sense of self. Fluidity can be reached (if) only through that understanding.

The existential choice of infusing meaning. In a fluid environment self -rooting gives the grounding. Fluid and ground

May 2018

Relative, relate, in relation - relativity means there are taboos and no holy cows that cannot be slaughtered even that it may rise difficult moral challenges. But in this acceptance Dora's it mean that being relative is absolute? I guess not - nit even that.

Awareness of life as a sliding door. The sense that things could have been very different as a result of a twist. (no regrets or anything like that). But the very sense of potential lives.

So is there a possibility of fascism that comes out of liberalism ?

How, when, where, sense

July 2018

There is a part of each one in each one including myself. In different proportion that colours their experience in a personal and unique way but this resonance create the essence of this experience. So, they all represent a piece of my puzzle.

Migrating by choice means you are confronted with the consequences of your choices on a daily basis.

Theoretically each participant could choose to move back at any given time. And despite the ties that tie them to their life here they could make a change if they wanted to.

And that is why they face the responsibility if their choices. They know that it is up to them and no one can be blamed from this choice. They have to own it.

They followed a dream (love and relationship) but have to face the ownership of that choice alone.

